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The Machel Review 1996-2000

A Critical Analysis of Progress Made and Obstacles Encountered in Increasing Protection for

War-Affected Children

Canada

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Foreword

"Adults go to war, but they don't realise what damage they are doing to children."

—Nicaraguan child

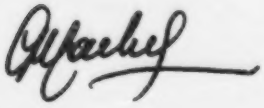
In my 1996 report, I set forth a series of recommendations to improve children's protection in armed conflict. I appealed for children to be considered 'zones of peace'. In spite of commitments made to children over the past four years by governments, regional organisations, the UN system and civil society, humankind has yet to declare childhood inviolate or spare children the pernicious effects of war.

There has indeed been great progress in many areas, as this review document illustrates. One of the crucial recommendations in the original report has been fulfilled beyond expectation with the appointment of Mr. Olara Otunnu as the Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict. His advocacy on behalf of war-affected children has raised the profile of this issue to the extent that it is now placed firmly on the international peace and security agenda.

UNICEF's leadership has encouraged new humanitarian programmes to promote children's protection in conflict and the fulfilment of their rights. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees has developed new responses to improve protection for refugee and displaced children and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights is giving greater attention to children and women within human rights verification, monitoring and reporting. Coalitions have formed across sectors to strengthen advocacy for war-affected children. And an ever greater number of exemplary civil society groups have been at the cutting edge of innovative policy development, research and field work. Some Governments have transformed their commitments to children by improving the standards for their protection, mobilising resources for their care, and establishing programmes to meet their needs.

And yet, our promises to children throughout the world remain unfulfilled.

This review is a second urgent call to action. It is a desperate plea for the compassion, the commitment and the tenacity needed to protect children from the atrocities of war. I still maintain that children present us with a uniquely compelling motivation for mobilisation. Our collective failure to protect children must be transformed into an opportunity to confront the problems that cause their suffering. The impact of armed conflict on children is everyone's responsibility and must be everyone's concern.



Graça Machel

Background

In August 1996, the Secretary-General of the United Nations released the expert report, 'The Impact of Armed Conflict on Children' prepared by Graça Machel. The report was undertaken with the support of the then United Nations Centre for Human Rights (now the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights), the United Nations Children's Fund, and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. An international process of research and consultation was undertaken, involving a group of eminent persons, a team of independent experts and civil society organisations. This resulted in a comprehensive agenda for action to improve the protection and care of children in situations of conflict.

The Machel Report broke new ground in many respects. Using the Convention on the Rights of the Child as a guiding framework of operative principles and standards, it provided the first comprehensive human rights assessment of war-affected children. In addition, the report drew particular attention to the situation of child soldiers, internally displaced and refugee children, child victims of landmines and sanctions, and the physical and psychosocial consequences of conflict. It examined the relevance and adequacy of international standards to the protection of children in conflict situations. The report explored systematically the dimensions and complexities of these concerns and firmly established their relevance to the international peace and security agenda.

This document reviews the wide-ranging series of actions taken in response to the recommendations of the 1996 Machel Report. Many of the significant achievements are woven into this text, which constitutes an early summary of a book that will be published in summer 2001. The book is currently being prepared by Ms. Machel and will provide a glossary of achievement since 1996 and recommend forward-looking strategies to increase children's protection in armed conflict. The current review document addresses the major themes of the 1996 report and brings new and expanded focus to five areas: small arms and light weapons, women's role in peace-building, peace and security, HIV/AIDS, media and communications.

The preparation of the review document and book would not have been possible without the support received from Canadian Minister Lloyd Axworthy and the Canadian Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, the Government of Norway, the United Nations Development Fund for Women, the United Nations Children's Fund, the Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, numerous independent experts, United Nations bodies and non-governmental organisations (NGOs).[2] Sincere thanks are given to the special advisors on this project: Stephen Lewis, Marta Santos Pais and Kimberly Gamble Payne. Special thanks are due to the Secretariat that helped prepare this Review, directed by Jennifer F. Klot and Theo Sowa.[3] The breadth of knowledge, analysis and innovation in the review is due largely to the many contributors and reviewers, but responsibility for the views expressed rests entirely with the author.

CHAPTER 1:

CIDA Photo: David Barbour

Wars Against Children

"I tell you, you cannot feel the pain of this suffering if you don't see it physically. If you only glance at it, a sword of sorrow will pierce your heart. ...What on earth is it that man today does not care for his fellow humans?"[1]

—Ugandan schoolgirl who escaped abduction by the Lord's Resistance Army

Wars have always victimised children and other non-combatants, but modern wars are exploiting, maiming and killing children more callously and more systematically than ever. Children today find themselves caught up in complex and confusing conflicts that have multiple causes and that lack clear prospects for resolution. Children are being sucked into seemingly endless endemic struggles for power and resources.

The end of the Cold War promised a cessation of the conflicts fuelled by the superpowers' ideological differences. Instead, wars have raged in virtually every part of the globe, either between or, more typically, within nation States. Though easily dismissed in the media as tribal wars or ethnic hostilities, these internecine conflicts have more recent and multiple roots. Their impact on children has been devastating. Millions of children have been killed as deliberate targets of warfare or drawn in as fighters. And millions more have

fallen victim to malnutrition, disease, sexual violence and the depredations of forced flight. Without pretending to limit the discussion, the current document identifies several critical causes:

- The fight over natural resources: diamonds have financed long-running wars in Sierra Leone and Angola. In Sudan, oil fuels the civil conflict. And the profits from narcotics are at the heart of struggles in Afghanistan and Colombia;
- None of these 'economies of war' could flourish without markets in richer countries. Global businesses, some legal, some illegal, have spawned international complicity that makes war not just possible, but highly profitable;
- The wars themselves are perpetuated by international weapons sales, especially small arms. Indeed, small arms are now so accessible that the poorest communities can gain access to deadly weapons capable of transforming any local conflict into a bloody slaughter;
- Constrained by debt and structural adjustment programs, many developing countries have been forced to restructure their economies, cut basic services and reduce the size of the public sector. In so doing, they have often weakened national economies and cleared the stage for other actors bent on power and profit.

Contemporary conflicts are particularly lethal for children because they make little distinction between combatants and civilians. In recent decades, the proportion of war victims who are civilians has leaped dramatically, from 5 per cent to over 90 per cent. During the 1990s, more than 2 million children have died as a result of armed conflicts, and more than three times as many have been permanently disabled or seriously injured.[5] Currently, approximately 20 million children have been uprooted from their homes, either as refugees or internally displaced.[6] At any given time, more than 300,000 children under the age of 18 are being used in hostilities as soldiers.[7]

Today's warfare often entails horrific levels of violence and brutality, employing any and all means—from systematic rape, to the destruction of crops and the poisoning of wells, to ethnic cleansing and outright genocide. Combatants appear to abandon all human standards, unleashing ferocious assaults against children and their communities. And children themselves can be drawn in as fighters, caught up in a general maelstrom in which they are not just the targets of warfare but even the perpetrators of atrocities. International emergency relief for the victims of conflict is inadequate and uneven. And it is well known that children and women suffer the most. Between 1994 and 1999, the United Nations requested $13.5 billion for emergency relief funding, but received less than $9 billion. And whereas donor countries provided $.59 per person each day to assist 3.5 million war-affected people in Kosovo and other areas of southeastern Europe in 1999, for Africa they provided 12 million people in emergencies with only $.13 per person per day.[8]

Beyond its emergency relief responsibilities, the United Nations has increasingly become involved in efforts at peacekeeping, peacemaking and peace-building. There have been a number of successes—in El Salvador, Namibia and Nicaragua. But there have also been some tragic failures—in the former Yugoslavia, Somalia and, most notably, in Rwanda.

The brutalities routinely committed against children pose a profound challenge to international law. The international community has fashioned impressive instruments to uphold human rights and to prosecute the perpetrators of genocide. However, many countries and armed groups have ignored their responsibilities under these treaties with impunity.

Key Themes:

In examining global actions taken since 1996 to increase children's protection in armed conflict, this review considers a wide range of important issues. The following major and overarching themes cut across each of these issues:

1. **Ending impunity for crimes against children: ending tolerance for war**
Massive and gross violations against children continue unabated. Death, rape, mutilation, forced recruitment, displacement, injury and malnourishment are a few of the grave consequences. These atrocities must not be tolerated as either inevitable or acceptable side-effects of war. Those who wage, legitimise and support wars must be condemned. Impunity for war crimes against children must end. National sovereignty must never shield those directly and indirectly responsible for committing such heinous crimes. National and international action must be taken to hold accountable all such perpetrators and those who support them.

2. **Ensuring children's centrality to the peace and security agenda**
The international community has, in recent years, bestowed unprecedented political legitimacy on the relevance of child rights to international peace and security. The political and operational mandates of peacemaking, peacekeeping and peace-building operations should always include special provisions to protect and assist children and women. Given the continuing expansion of regional and subregional arrangements with respect to humanitarian and human rights concerns in armed conflict, continued and improved collaboration between these and the United Nations is recommended, with increased attention to child rights, protection and gender.

3. **Improved monitoring and reporting on child rights violations in conflict**
When the lives and fundamental rights of children are at stake, there must be no silent witnesses. Protecting human rights is a fundamental, yet overwhelmingly neglected aspect of peacemaking, peace-building and humanitarian operations. In conflict situations, increased resources and attention must be given to monitor, verify and report child rights and gender-based violations. To this end, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights should be strengthened to carry out these functions in all conflict situations. In addition, all UN bodies and international and national organisations with field presence should put in place proper channels to report human rights violations witnessed or serious allegations received.

4. **The gender dimensions of conflict and peace-building**
The lives of children are jeopardised when the lives of women are not protected and where their efforts and contributions to peace-building are under-reported, marginalized and undermined. Due in large part to the insufficient understanding of the impact of armed conflict on women and girls, political, policy and programme approaches continue to neglect attention to the gender dimensions. For these reasons, the gender dimensions of conflict must be better understood. Glaring gaps in the protection of women and girls must be addressed. Humanitarian and development assistance must be better targeted and women's role in peace-building must be supported.

5. **Adolescents: the greatest resource**
Adolescents are at extreme risk during armed conflict. They are targets for recruitment into armed forces and armed groups; they are targets for sexual exploitation and abuse; and they are at great risk of sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV/AIDS. Although adolescents have been neglected in the delivery of health services, education, vocational training and life skills, they continue to be the greatest hope and the greatest resource in rebuilding war-affected communities Their active

participation in community-based relief, recovery and reconstruction programmes will strengthen and sustain these initiatives while increasing adolescents' sense of purpose, self-esteem and identity.

6. Children under siege from HIV/AIDS

Over the past five years, HIV/AIDS has become the single most powerful new factor compounding the dangers for children in a conflict. The chaotic and brutal circumstances of war aggravate all of the factors that fuel the HIV/AIDS pandemic. HIV/AIDS devastates children by leaving millions orphaned; by killing teachers, health workers and other public servants; and by straining community resources. HIV/AIDS has been recognised as a global threat to peace and security, and urgent solutions are needed to address the compounded effects of HIV/AIDS and armed conflict on children. Emergency humanitarian relief should support HIV/AIDS awareness, prevention, care and treatment while contributing to the establishment of longer-term national policies.

7. Improving information, data collection and analysis on children in conflict

Effective political, policy and programme approaches for children in conflict cannot be put in place without accurate and timely information. While the 1996 Machel Report collected base-line data and information on a range of important areas, no systematic approach has since been taken to analyse and collect gender and age disaggregated data in the range of areas relevant to war-affected children. UNICEF is called upon to convene all relevant bodies to devise and recommend a systematic approach to collecting, analysing and making available gender and age disaggregated data on children in conflict situations and to promote the mobilisation of the resources needed for this work.

8. Training and sensitisation on child rights and gender

The need for specialised training and sensitisation on the child and gender dimensions of conflict are highlighted throughout this review. At political, policy and operational levels, training and sensitisation is needed to ensure children's protection in conflict. Key issues include the gender and child rights aspects of protection, international humanitarian, human rights and refugee law. Current, ad hoc approaches to training have been limited in their impact. To move this agenda forward in a significant way, a plan of action needs to be put in place taking into account three main elements: coordination and cooperation of training initiatives among the United Nations, member States, regional organisations and NGOs; resource mobilisation; and quality, content and standardisation of training initiatives.

9. Supporting civil society, protecting children

National and international civil society groups play a fundamental role in preventing armed conflicts, protecting children and rebuilding societies in the aftermath of war. This review pays tribute to these important efforts. Special attention is called to the courageous work of national humanitarian personnel whose protection the international community has failed to guarantee, sometimes with fatal consequences. Special measures should be put in place to protect all those on the front lines who take grave risks to protect children and women in need.

10. Mobilising resources for war-affected children

The vast inconsistency in mobilising resources for war-affected children is one of the most brutal inequalities in the world today. Sierra Leone received less than $20 per child in 1999 compared to $216 per child in Kosovo. The shortfalls and disparities in humanitarian relief are repeated in the patterns of official development assistance so vital for post-conflict reconstruction. Appeals for war-affected children do not fit easily within the distinct, often rigid and compartmentalised funding guidelines. Donors are urged to put in place criteria to overcome the disparities in resource mobilisation for war-affected children across conflict situations and to reduce the institutional, budgetary and functional barriers between relief assistance, rehabilitation and development cooperation.

CHAPTER 2:

CIDA Photo: Peter Bennett

Child Soldiers

"When I was killing, I felt like it wasn't me doing these things. I had to because the rebels threatened to kill me."[9]

—12-year-old boy from Sierra Leone abducted into the rebel forces

In recent years, armies, rebels, paramilitary and militia groups all over the world have recruited hundreds of thousands of child soldiers. Currently, there are thought to be around 300,000.[10] Most are adolescents, though many are 10 years of age or younger. A child soldier is any child—boy or girl—under the age of 18 who is compulsorily, forcibly, voluntarily recruited or otherwise used in hostilities by armed forces, paramilitaries, civil defense units or other armed groups. Child soldiers are used for sexual services, as combatants, as forced 'wives', messengers, porters, or cooks.

The use of child soldiers has remained stubbornly constant over recent years, while the cumulative impact has increased steadily. The estimated figure of 300,000 child soldiers reflects the number of children being used in combat at any one time. As conflicts flare up and children are killed, wounded, grow older and are replaced by other children, the cumulative total is much higher and the destruction carries over from one generation to the next.[11]

Child soldiers are recruited by conscription, abduction, or coercion. In addition, youth also present themselves for service. It is misleading, however, to consider this voluntary. While young

people may appear to choose military service, the choice is not exercised freely. They may be driven by any of several forces, including cultural, social, economic or political pressures. Once recruited, they take on support functions and fighting roles that entail great risk and hardship. Nearly all girls abducted into armed groups are forced into sexual slavery, subjected to physical and emotional violence, and forced to provide other personal services. The majority become infected with sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) and, increasingly, HIV/AIDS.[12] Describing this experience as a 'forced' marriage is a complete misrepresentation and distortion of a child's experience. In addition, these young people are exposed relentlessly to extreme violence and suffering and become increasingly desensitized to the horror around them. In a number of cases, young people have been deliberately exposed to horrific scenes to harden them or to sever their links with their communities.

> ***The 1996 Machel Report called for an international campaign against the use of child soldiers; for peace agreements to support their demobilisation and reintegration; and for the age for recruitment and participation in the armed forces to be raised to 18 years through the adoption of an Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child.***

Since 1996, growing pressure from civil society, the Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers, and collaboration with like-minded governments has created a sense of urgency to remove every child under the age of 18 from armed forces. There have been several key developments to this end:

- In May 2000, the United Nations General Assembly adopted an Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child establishing 18 as the minimum age for the participation of children in hostilities. Although the protocol prohibits non-governmental forces from recruiting children below the age of 18, it allows States to establish a minimum age for voluntary recruitment that is not necessarily 18.
- The African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child and the International Labour Organisation (ILO) Convention 182 set 18 as the minimum age for child recruitment. The latter calls for the elimination of forced or compulsory recruitment of children into armed conflict.
- The 1998 Statute of the International Criminal Court defined, as a war crime, the conscription or enlistment of children under 15 years of age into armed forces and their taking part in conflict.
- As an example for police and military forces world-wide, the United Nations established 18 as the minimum age for UN peacekeepers, further recommending that civilian police and military observers be no younger than 25 years.
- In a Security Council report, the UN Secretary-General demanded that rebel and other armed groups recruit no soldiers under 18 years of age or face targeted sanctions.

These are important steps on the road to ending children's participation in hostilities. Recent international standards and policies defining this atrocity as a war crime confirms what everyone knows instinctively: of course it is a war crime. The use of child soldiers is as unacceptable as the impunity that prevails for this egregious abuse. States and non-state parties have not had to bear any consequences —even where there have been systematic reports of armed forces or armed groups involving children in hostilities, such as in Afghanistan, Angola, Colombia, Democratic Republic of Congo, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Sri Lanka and Uganda, among others.

In February 2000, the Secretary-General released *The Role of United Nations Peacekeeping in Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration.* This was a milestone towards increasing commitment to include child soldiers within demobilization and reintegration programmes in peacekeeping operations. The report calls for a minimum three-year commitment of staff and resources to children's longer-term needs for education, vocational training and psychosocial support. Unless children demobilized from armies are given alternatives to soldiering, they are likely to be recruited again into armed groups. Although increasing attention has been paid to disarming, demobilizing and reintegrating children within a peacekeeping environment, more attention must be paid to such arrangements outside of a peacekeeping environment.

Many demobilization programmes falter precisely because of flawed design and monitoring or insufficient resources. Children should be immediately separated from adult soldiers and transported some distance from conflict zones to avoid re-recruitment. No more than 48 hours should elapse from the time of their release until they are transferred to civilian control. Reintegrating children requires dedicated and long-term support beginning with programmes to reunify them with their families and communities. Regaining acceptance may require community mediation and forgiveness or cleansing rituals. Governments and humanitarian agencies must better address the special needs of former child soldiers, and especially girl child soldiers, for education, health care, HIV/AIDS awareness and prevention, life skills, psychosocial recuperation and vocational training. At the same time, programmes for child soldiers must be placed within an overall approach to war-affected children.

More effective measures must be taken to prevent the recruitment of children. These should include monitoring and enforcing legal commitments to forbid recruitment below a minimum age, introducing or re-establishing reliable birth registrations systems, and providing educational and vocational opportunities for young people. In all advocacy efforts care must be taken, based on the best interests of the child, to avoid causing further harm. In particular, child soldiers should be protected from exploitative forms of fund-raising publicity and media exposure before, during and after demobilisation.

The Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, Mr. Olara Otunnu, has played a lead role in ongoing negotiations with government and rebel forces, including in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Sierra Leone, Sri Lanka and Colombia, to end the use of child soldiers. Commitments that have resulted from these efforts must be encouraged. Their translation into action must be monitored and documented to assist follow-up and to support future initiatives.

In spite of landmark progress, the recruitment of child soldiers continues. And there is even the chilling possibility that in recent conflicts children have been recruited much more deliberately, not just due to their availability and relative cheapness, but because they are more easily indoctrinated into violence and thus more willing than adults to carry out atrocities.

Recommendations:

1. States must ratify without reservation, implement and incorporate in their national legislation the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict. Consistent with Article 3 of the Protocol, they are encouraged to submit a binding declaration setting 18 as the standard minimum age for voluntary recruitment, and participation in hostilities.

2 Programmes to disarm, demobilise and reintegrate child soldiers must be made a priority within and outside of a peacekeeping environment. These should include special measures to ensure children's protection from exploitation and re-recruitment, and to address the special needs of girls and children with disabilities.

3 Governments and armed groups must prevent the recruitment of child soldiers and ensure their demobilisation and reintegration. To this end, birth registration should be promoted, especially among refugee and internally displaced children and children belonging to minorities.

4 Child soldiers must be protected from retribution, summary execution, arbitrary detention, torture and other punitive measures, in accordance with the Convention on the Rights of the Child and international juvenile justice standards. Any judicial proceedings involving child soldiers must be within a framework of restorative justice that guarantees the physical, psychological and social rehabilitation of the child.

CIDA Photo: Roger LeMoyne

Children Forced to Flee

"We left our village when the bombs began falling. Some people stayed, but we were afraid of being killed. The bombs were like earthquakes that didn't stop. You spend many years building up a home, and then, in one moment, it is destroyed."[13]

—17-year-old Aygun, Azerbaijan

Today about 1 in every 150 people on earth—a total of 40 million—are displaced by conflict or human rights violations. Approximately half of these are children.[14] Those who stay within their own national borders are considered 'internally displaced persons' (IDPs), while those forced to flee to other countries become 'refugees'. Displacement is disruptive and dangerous for children. It deprives them of the security of their community and exposes them to multiple dangers. Internally displaced children suffer further from the constant flight that often places them beyond the reach of UN agency and NGO programmes.

The 1996 Machel Report called for increased international commitment to and cooperation for the care and protection of refugee and internally displaced children, particularly in relation to family reunification, education and equitable delivery of humanitarian assistance. It asked for a legal framework on assistance and protection for internally displaced persons and recommended that a lead agency in each situation be identified for their care. The report recognised adolescents as key resources in their communities and called for special services to meet their needs.

In the chaos of conflict and escape, many children become separated from their parents. These children are especially vulnerable to hunger, disease, violence, military recruitment and sexual assault. The first priority of relief programmes, therefore, is to identify and register unaccompanied and separated children and ensure their protection and survival. This includes documentation, family tracing and reunification with family or community-based interim care where necessary. It is always essential to keep brothers and sisters together. A major reunification effort, assisted by modern computer technology, was undertaken by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), in partnership with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), UNICEF, International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), Save the Children Fund UK, World Vision and some 150 humanitarian organisations. Together they succeeded in reuniting more than 67,000 children with family members in the Great Lakes Region between 1994 and 2000.[15] Yet current conflicts in the region continue to displace and separate greater numbers of children and their families.

In 1998, the UN Secretary-General's Representative on Internally Displaced Persons, Mr. Francis Deng, released a set of *Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement.* Consistent with international human rights and humanitarian law, these principles provide a normative framework for the protection and assistance of internally displaced persons and pay special attention to internally displaced children. The overall impact of these important principles will depend on how effectively they are promoted and implemented by governments, humanitarian agencies and civil society groups.

The delivery of protection and aid to IDPs is complicated by the need to balance issues of national sovereignty with questions of survival. When a government is unable or unwilling to assist their own dispossessed—or is itself the cause of displacement—then the international community is called upon to take action. Yet the international community has not itself charted a clear course of action. In some instances, the Security Council has moved to protect citizens endangered by internal conflict, but there has been no consistent framework or consensus on which to base such interventions. With respect to children, however, the guidance has been more specific. On August 11, 2000, a new Security Council Resolution (1314) on children and armed conflict was adopted. It calls specifically for protection and assistance to refugees and internally displaced children, and reaffirms, for humanitarian purposes, the need for unhindered access to children affected by armed conflict.

At the operational level, no UN body has an explicit or global mandate to protect and assist the internally displaced. Despite significant improvements in coordinating the various arrangements at the field level, the protection of IDPs remains ad hoc and often ineffective. The collaborative team approach that has been taken over the past four years has been good in principle but less effective in practice. Angola is a clear example of an IDP situation that has had devastating results for children and women. It highlights the alarming neglect of internally displaced persons over the past decade and the inadequacy of the current approach for the protection of internally displaced children and women in particular.

Above all, protection and assistance for internally displaced children should include measures to prevent sexual exploitation, physical abuse and forced military recruitment. Without special support, displaced children will not survive the overcrowding, poor sanitation, lack of food and unclean water they encounter. Multisectoral approaches to health, nutrition, child rights and protection are the only way to protect children in these circumstances.

Ultimately, displaced children and their families need to return home, resettle or be integrated into the host country. The safety and well-being of displaced women and child-headed families relies significantly on their access to land, property, housing and essential services. Some attempts have been made to assure the legal rights of displaced populations and of women and child-headed families in particular. Yet in general, long-term assistance for displaced communities is lacking.

Among displaced children, it is adolescents who are the most consistently under-served. In recent years, UNHCR has begun to mainstream support for children and adolescents into all areas of its work. It established four regional policy officers for children to help carry this work out through country operation plans.[16] The International Rescue Committee offers programmes on leadership, skills and vocational training and provides access to formal education for displaced adolescents in several countries, including East Timor, Georgia and Rwanda. In Guinea, Kenya, Liberia, Sierra Leone and Tanzania, UNHCR and the United Nation's Population Fund (UNFPA) run programmes to address sexual and gender-based violence against adolescent refugee girls.[17] While these are encouraging first steps towards meeting the rights of adolescent children affected by conflict, on the whole, more attention must be paid to their special needs. Among the most essential priorities are education, health care, HIV/AIDS awareness and prevention, life skills, psychosocial support and vocational training.

Recommendations:

The following recommendations will be jeopardized if the international community does not increase its commitment to the care and protection of internally displaced children and women through the provision of adequate resources.

1. In every single situation where there are internally displaced persons, a lead agency should be identified. The agency most involved should be designated, and it follows logically that in the majority of cases this agency will be UNHCR. In those instances where UNHCR is not already directly involved, the agency most engaged should be designated. It is expected that the lead agency will collaborate with all other agencies directly involved, e.g. UNICEF and the World Food Programme (WFP). In all cases, UNICEF should be a major partner in the care and protection of internally displaced children.

2. States and other relevant actors should commit themselves to promote, disseminate, apply and integrate into national legislation and policy the *Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement*, with particular attention to the articles relating to children and women.

3. The international community is urged to provide increased financial and human resources to support the Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General (RSG) on Internally Displaced Persons, particularly in his efforts to: develop monitoring mechanisms to promote more effective compliance with the *Guiding Principles*; provide advice on obstacles encountered in the protection of IDP

children and women; intervene in a timely manner; and mobilise effective international and regional responses. Specifically, UNICEF and UNHCR are encouraged to continue providing appropriate financial and human resources to foster closer collaboration with the RSG.

4. The survival and protection of unaccompanied and separated children must be ensured, giving priority consideration to family tracing. When family members cannot be identified, extended family and community care should be arranged.

5. Urgent attention must be given to meeting the special needs of displaced adolescents and involving them centrally in the planning, provision and management of services in camps.

CHAPTER 4:

CIDA Photo: Bruce Paton

Children Under Siege from HIV/AIDS

"Fifty per cent of the new infections (HIV/AIDS) which take place today are in the age group of 15 to 25. I mean if we are the future and we're dying, there is no future."[18]

—Mary Phiri, editor of Trendsetters, an HIV/AIDS news monthly produced by teenagers in Zambia

Over the past five years, HIV/AIDS has changed the landscape of war more than any other single factor. Worldwide, HIV/AIDS has killed 3.8 million children and orphaned 13 million more. In many parts of Africa, HIV/AIDS is now the main threat to human survival—18.8 million people have already died of AIDS,[19] and in a number of the worst-affected countries, it is estimated that up to half of all today's 15-year-olds will die from the disease.[20]

The 1996 Machel Report pointed to the dangers that HIV/AIDS posed during armed conflicts due to increased sexual violence and the failure of health care systems. Since then, the situation has deteriorated. At least 34 million people around the world are now infected with the HIV virus. [21]

The chaotic and brutal circumstances of war aggravate all the factors that fuel the HIV/AIDS crisis. War breaks up families and communities, creating millions of refugees and placing women and children in great peril of sexual attack or systematic rape used to terrorise opposing forces. It destroys the health services that might have been able to identify the diseases associated with HIV/AIDS or screen the blood transfusions that might transmit it. War destroys the education systems that might have been able to teach prevention and slow the spread of the disease. AIDS contributes to political instability by leaving millions of children orphaned and by killing teachers, health workers and other public servants.

The links between AIDS and conflict run in both directions, each one reinforcing the other. And both are compounded by poverty and the gender dimensions of conflict and the pandemic. These relationships need further exploration. Of the 17 countries with over 100,000 children orphaned by AIDS, 13 are in conflict or on the brink of emergency and 13 are heavily indebted poor countries. On all continents throughout the world, developing countries carry a debt burden of about $2 trillion and those countries also carry 95 per cent of the HIV/AIDS burden.[22]

Another factor accelerating the spread of HIV infection during conflict is involvement with military forces. In conflict situations, the main perpetrators of sexual abuse and exploitation are armed forces or armed groups.[23] In addition, soldiers are typically young, sexually active men who are likely to seek commercial sex. Even during peacetime, they have STD infection rates two to five times greater than those of civilian populations. During armed conflict their rate of infection can be up to 50 times higher.[24] Under certain circumstances some armed forces already impose mandatory HIV testing, but voluntary testing, combined with confidential counselling, support and treatment, is far more effective—and almost nowhere available. Regardless of their HIV status, all military personnel should be supplied with condoms, within the context of HIV education and prevention. In addition to education and training, strict enforcement of codes of conduct through disciplinary action can help lessen the incidence of sexual violence.

About half of the people with HIV become infected by the age 25 and are likely to die with AIDS by age 35, leaving their children to be raised by grandparents or to fend for themselves in child-headed households.[25] But when entire populations are suffering from both the effects of armed conflict and HIV/AIDS, it makes no sense to speak about children orphaned by AIDS on the one hand and war on the other. They are all equally without resources, exposed to violence, at risk of becoming victims of sexual violence and vulnerable to HIV infection. All orphans need the support of their communities. Not only do they need emotional support, they require ready access to health services and education. Life skills curricula in schools should ensure that cooking, hygiene and other important domestic skills are integral parts of the training and support that children receive. Providing this support to all children as an integral part of mainstream education will help avoid stigmatisation and discrimination against children orphaned by HIV/AIDS. Immediate concerns should be addressed such as homelessness, malnutrition and protection from exploitation; and the right to keep siblings together, as well as legal rights such as inheritance and property ownership.

More than 10 million people living with HIV today are between 10 and 24 years of age. At least 50 per cent of all new infections occur in the 10-24 age group, with 7,000 new infections every day.[26] These statistics underline the imperative for HIV/AIDS prevention and counselling in all programmes related to the reintegration of war-affected young people, especially ex-combatant and refugee children. Although adolescents have the highest rates of HIV, they also represent a huge asset when it comes to rebuilding communities. Armed with abundant resilience and learning capacity, they are an invaluable resource, particularly as communicators, information carriers and counsellors for other war-affected youth and the wider community.

Over 90 per cent of all HIV-infected children under the age of 15 started life as babies born to HIV-positive mothers. Recent studies indicate that the administration of anti-retroviral drugs can reduce HIV transmission at birth, but without access to these drugs, or other interventions around one in three HIV-positive pregnant women will pass the infection on during pregnancy, at birth or through breastfeeding.[27] Yet women have no choice but to breastfeed. In refugee camps, there is little or no access to safe water, let alone formula, or the money to buy it with. Indeed, breastfeeding is likely to be the safest method of infant feeding. This speaks to the urgent need for women to have access to testing, counselling and anti-retroviral drugs. But that access does not exist for populations in developing countries even during times of peace. The failure to provide that minimum assistance underlines the obstacles that must be overcome in order to reach populations in conflict.

Programming to prevent and treat HIV/AIDS must be vigorously pursued at the national and local level. In the absence of functioning health and education systems in conflict situations, humanitarian agencies and NGOs have provided health services for displaced populations who would be otherwise unreachable. All humanitarian responses in conflict situations should ensure, within the mainstream of health care, free voluntary and confidential counselling and testing for HIV/AIDS, proper screening of blood, and medical supplies to deal with the opportunistic infections that accompany HIV/AIDS. These services must be available throughout the whole population to avoid inadvertently creating a double standard.

No matter how difficult the circumstances, HIV/AIDS has to be confronted vigorously and resolutely. So far the response has been tragically inadequate. In 1998, only $300 million was spent by donor countries on the fight against AIDS.[28] An estimated $3 billion is needed, i.e. $1.5 billion for prevention activities and $1.5 billion for basic care, excluding anti-retroviral drugs.[29] Currently, no country in Africa spends more than 1 per cent of its health budget on HIV/AIDS. Drug treatment has become steadily more effective, but at present, only a tiny minority of people in developing countries has any access to such treatments. And the studies on the effectiveness of anti-retrovirals have not been conducted in war-affected countries. A way must be found to reduce dramatically the cost of all AIDS-related drugs for use in developing countries.

The international community has begun to unify its efforts in the fight against HIV/AIDS. In July 2000, the Security Council recognised the threat of the AIDS pandemic and called for strategies to prevent the possible spread of HIV infection through peacekeeping forces. In addition, the International Partnership Against AIDS in Africa (IPAA), a collaboration among African governments, international donors, United Nations agencies, civil society and the private sector, was formed in 1999 to consolidate strategies and resource mobilisation for the fight against AIDS in Africa. It has called for increased support for fragile government structures in conflict-affected countries, to develop comprehensive national AIDS programmes. Within the United Nations, an Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) subgroup on HIV/AIDS in complex emergencies was formed to draft policy and coordinate programmes in response to the HIV/AIDS pandemic in war-torn countries. HIV/AIDS prevention and care during emergencies should be made more prominent in the UN Consolidated Appeal Process. To this end, donors are urged to provide appropriate resources.

Far more can and must be done. At the XII International AIDS Conference, in Durban, South Africa, former-President Nelson Mandela issued a challenge and a word of encouragement to governments, communities, agencies and NGOs: "Stigma and discrimination can be stopped, new infections can be prevented and the capacity of families and communities to care for people living with HIV and AIDS can be enhanced. The challenge is to move from rhetoric to action, and action at an unprecedented intensity and scale."

Recommendations:

1. In the belief that care and services must be made available to all populations affected by AIDS, in peacetime and during war, governments, humanitarian and development agencies and NGOs are called upon to re-frame their work and increase technical support and resources so that improved treatment, care and support is available for children affected by HIV/AIDS in conflict and in neighbouring communities.

2. On an urgent basis and during the tenure of the UNICEF Executive Director as Chair of the Committee of Co-sponsoring Organisations[30] a full meeting should be devoted exclusively to issues of HIV/AIDS, children and conflict. UNHCR should be invited to this meeting. The discussion should address methods and standards for HIV/AIDS prevention, treatment and care for children affected by conflict, and for refugee, internally displaced and neighbouring communities. Specific reference should be made to the work of the International Partnership Against AIDS in Africa (IPAA).

3. Schools and educational systems should be the centrepiece for HIV/AIDS awareness, prevention and care during emergencies, including expanded life skills curricula that offer nutritional support, hygiene and other domestic survival skills.

4. Education and training on HIV/AIDS prevention should be made mandatory for all military and peacekeeping personnel, together with voluntary and confidential counselling, testing and treatment. Codes of conduct should be strictly enforced through disciplinary action, which can help lessen the incidence of sexual violence.

5. All relief organisations, and in particular NGOs, working in conflict-affected countries should ensure urgently the development and mainstreaming of HIV/AIDS approaches in their policy and practice.

6. More resources should be allocated to assess, including through data analysis, the links between AIDS, conflict and children, with particular reference to the gender dimensions of conflict and the pandemic.

CHAPTER 5:

CP Photo Archive: Kitinun Rodsupan

Ending Gender-Based Violence and Sexual Exploitation

"I was defiled by some older boys [could not remember how many] when we were being marched to the rebel camp. After returning from Sudan, I was a wife to one rebel commander, then another junior commander and then two 'older' rebel soldiers. I had one child who died when he was a few days old. I was a slave to the rebels for 19 months. I do not think I will marry again."[31]

–A (now 18-year-old) girl, abducted by the Lord's Resistance Army

During armed conflict, women and girls are continually threatened by rape, domestic violence, sexual exploitation, trafficking, sexual humiliation and mutilation. They are at risk in all settings, whether at home, in flight or in camps for displaced persons. The perpetrators of sexual violence include partners, acquaintances and the military. The main perpetrators of sexual violence and exploitation are typically the armed forces of parties to a conflict, whether governmental or other actors. Senior officers often turn a blind eye to the sexual crimes of those under their command, but they must be held accountable both for their own behaviour and for the behaviour of those they supervise.

The arrival of peacekeeping troops has been associated with a rapid rise in child prostitution. These and other acts of violence committed by peacekeeping personnel against women and children are rarely reported or investigated. Even though the United Nations has taken some action to control the behaviour of peacekeeping personnel, it is still relatively rare for disciplinary measures to be taken.[32]

Until recently, these forms of sexual attack and exploitation were dismissed as the inevitable side-effects of armed conflict. A more accurate view is that sexual attacks and exploitation are used systematically during armed conflict to humiliate and terrorise.

> ***The 1996 Machel Report emphasised the importance of reproductive health care and psychosocial support for women and girls who had been subjected to gender-based violence. It called for all military personnel to receive training on their legal responsibilities to women and children. It also called for the treatment of rape to be clarified as a war crime.***

Those who authorise or perpetrate sexual violence during armed conflict violate international law. When they do so on a massive scale or as a matter of policy, they are committing crimes against humanity. Recently, the International Criminal Tribunals for the former Yugoslavia and for Rwanda have highlighted the use of rape during those conflicts and brought gender-based charges against the instigators of war crimes. Even though the judgements cover only a tiny fraction of cases, they represent an historic precedent in prosecuting sexual violence within armed conflicts. For the first time, these tribunals punished sexual violence in a civil war, addressed the various contexts of gender-based and sexual violence in armed conflict, and elaborated rape as an act of genocide

The Statute of the International Criminal Court has the potential to protect and promote the human rights of women and girls. It explicitly recognises crimes of gender and sexual violence as war crimes and crimes against humanity. The Statute addresses trauma counselling, rehabilitation, reparation and compensation to the victims of war crimes and calls for gender and child-sensitive court procedures.

Sexual violence has a devastating impact on children's physical and emotional development. The most immediate dangers are sexually transmitted diseases and HIV/AIDS, which rapidly damage health, jeopardise future sexual and reproductive functions and may ultimately cause death.[33] The less visible dangers are the humiliation and anguish that may lead girls and young women to withdraw into a shell of pain and denial, or even commit suicide. After the trauma of sexual violence, some adolescent girls suffer in silence. They fear reprisals from those who attacked them or rejection by their families. Many young women also face the prospect of childbirth as a result of rape and sexual exploitation in armed conflict. Whether they carry their pregnancies to term will depend on many local circumstances, including the availability of community support, pervading religious or cultural mores, and access to appropriate reproductive health services. Humanitarian assistance during armed conflicts must include community-based psychosocial and reproductive health services, and give high priority to women and children who have witnessed or who have been subjected to gender-based violence.

Thus far, humanitarian responses have been largely inadequate, but awareness is increasing about the need to seriously address these issues. In this context, UNHCR has attempted to better equip relief workers to respond to the needs of refugee victims of sexual violence. It has published guidelines on this and on the evaluation and care of victims of trauma and violence. Successful programmes require the full involvement

of local communities in their design and implementation. Services should include economic assistance and psychosocial support while protecting the privacy of recipients.

The poverty, fear and stressful conditions inherent to armed conflict renders women and children especially vulnerable to trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation. Although the commercial sexual exploitation of women and children is a well recognised consequence of armed conflict, both the 1996 Congress Against Commercial Sexual Exploitation and the Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography failed to recognise, address or highlight these links. Countries that have adopted the 1996 Congress Declaration and Agenda for Action and that have signed the Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography should examine their relevance to situations of armed conflict.

Recommendations:

1. A growing trend has been noted of the trafficking and sexual exploitation of women and girls in conflict situations, mainly through observation and anecdotal evidence. Data should be gathered and this trend documented systematically. Two specific assessments are recommended:
   a) a joint report on the trafficking of women and girls in conflict situations by the Special Rapporteur on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography and by the Special Rapporteur on the Eradication of All Forms of Violence Against Women.
   b) a second, multi-country study, 'Where are the babies?' to follow up the situation of women and the children born following rape and forced impregnation in countries including the former Yugoslavia, Uganda, Guatemala, Sierra Leone and Liberia.

2. States are urged to join the campaign for the establishment of the ICC to help end the impunity for crimes against women and girls. In implementing the ICC Statute domestically, States should strengthen national laws to prevent and to prosecute gender-based and sexual crimes.

3. The Secretary-General and the Security Council must be unrelenting in their pursuit of the highest standards of conduct by peacekeeping personnel. Where violations against women and children have been committed by UN personnel, States must investigate and punish offences and make public the results of such proceedings. Urgent attention must be given to establishing disciplinary and oversight mechanisms in all peace support operations, in the form of an ombudsperson, an Inspector General or through an Office created especially for that purpose.

4. All humanitarian responses in conflict situations must emphasise the special reproductive health needs of women and girls, include systematic reporting on sexual violence, and reflect strengthened policy guidance on gender-based violence and sexual exploitation.

CHAPTER 6:

CIDA Photo: Roger LaMoyne

The Toll from Malnutrition and Disease

"The situation in the camp is not nice. . . . And people are starving there—not to death but not enough for human life."[34]

— Southern Sudanese youth

Thousands of children are killed every year as a direct result of fighting—from knife wounds, bullets, bombs and landmines, but many more die from malnutrition and disease caused or heightened by conflict. Wars interrupt food supplies and destroy crops and agricultural infrastructures. They also destroy water and sanitation systems along with health services. Of the 10 countries with the highest rates of under-five deaths, seven are affected by armed conflict. Angola and Sierra Leone have the highest death rates; nearly one in three children dies before the age of five.[35] Recent research by the International Rescue Committee found that conflict caused 1.7 million civilian deaths in the eastern Congo between

August 1998 and May 2000. One third of the deaths were children under five.[36] Many children die because their families or other caregivers are unable to provide the food and care necessary for their survival.

Displaced children uprooted from their homes and in refugee camps face the greatest health risks and suffer the highest death rates. Since 1990, the most commonly reported causes of death among refugees and internally displaced persons have been diarrhoeal diseases, acute respiratory infections, measles and other common, preventable infectious diseases.

> ***The 1996 Machel Report called for the maintenance of basic health systems and water supplies during conflicts. It called for child-based needs assessment and 'days of tranquility'. The report called for equity in emergency food and relief distribution, and support to improve household food security. The report encouraged health workers and other professionals to disseminate information on child rights and to report any violations encountered in the course of their work.***

UNICEF, the World Health Organization (WHO) and other partners have negotiated temporary cease-fires, or 'days of tranquility', with warring parties to deliver essential health services and allow children to be vaccinated against childhood diseases. But conflicts continue to disrupt such campaigns, including the global campaign to eradicate polio. In Angola and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, for example, conflict has prevented health workers from immunizing children in insecure areas against polio. While 'days of tranquility' have increased humanitarian access to children, they are limited by their very design and should be seen only as a partial step towards securing full and unlimited access to children at all times. Denying access to health care or food supplies has been defined by the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court as a crime against humanity. Stronger steps are needed to end impunity for such acts.

Rape and sexual violence have become a defining characteristic of contemporary conflicts that dramatically increases the potential for spreading HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases. Population movements and the breakdown of established social values increase the likelihood of unprotected sexual activity and multiple sexual partners. As a response, several agencies are making available reproductive health information in conflict situations. UNFPA has developed a reproductive health kit that provides the basic supplies needed to perform clean, safe deliveries. And a number of NGOs have formed a Reproductive Health for Refugees Consortium to implement reproductive health programmes for refugees in more than a dozen countries.

One of the most immediate effects of armed conflict is the disruption of food production and supplies. Nutritional crises result and dependency on food assistance increases. The vast disparity in humanitarian assistance for war-affected children in different countries is one of the most brutal inequalities in the world today. Humanitarian relief for Kosovar refugees in 1999 prevented an increase in malnutrition in children under five. During the same time period, 20 per cent of Angolan displaced children suffered from wasting and 7 per cent from severe wasting.[37]

One of the best nutritional defences for infants is adequate breastfeeding. This provides ideal food for infants and reduces the incidence and severity of infectious diseases. Breastfeeding also contributes to women's health by reducing the risk of post-partum haemorrhage, anaemia, and breast and ovarian cancer. Infants should be breastfed exclusively for about six months and should continue to be breastfed with adequate complementary food for two years or beyond. During conflicts, breastfeeding is often interrupted by separation, maternal trauma and exhaustion. But unless mothers are severely malnourished,

most can continue to breastfeed adequately. Where food shortages exist, it is very important that breastfeeding women are given priority in food distribution so that they can breastfeed and maintain or restore their own well-being.

A good way to ensure that food and other forms of emergency assistance benefit children is to channel aid through women. Community administrative structures, typically controlled by men, have been found to limit distribution to women and children. Worse, men may trade food supplies for weapons. In light of this experience, WFP is now giving women more control over food aid and is encouraging them to participate in the design, implementation and monitoring of food distribution.

As important as food aid is, it should not be seen as a solution in itself. Rather it should be part of a wider strategy aimed at building household food security and improving health. This is particularly important in long-running conflicts, where families need to develop their own capacities and become self-reliant.

Overall, however, progress has been limited. Armed groups continue to attack health facilities, destroy food supplies and kill humanitarian workers. And aid has been inadequate and unevenly distributed. As a result, the rights of war-affected children to health care and nutrition are denied in many countries, and they continue to die and suffer brutal assaults in large numbers.

Recommendations:

1. Political pressure and other measures should be mobilised to ensure that warring parties provide access to health systems, clean water and adequate nutrition. Days of tranquillity and corridors of peace, vital for securing emergency access, must be expanded to ensure respect for children's rights at all times during conflicts.

2. Donors and international agencies must work to end great disparities in international humanitarian assistance provided to different countries during armed conflicts. Shifts in media coverage, political priorities and other causes of 'donor fatigue' must no longer cost children's lives in forgotten conflicts.

3. Upon ratification of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, States are required to allocate the maximum resources possible for children, including for health, sanitation, nutrition and water. This requirement is especially important in conflict situations and is reinforced by articles 4, 23, 24 and 28 of the Convention, which highlight the international community's special responsibility to make resources available to meet the needs of developing countries.

4. Governments of war-affected countries, international agencies and NGOs, and donor countries must accord greater resources and a higher priority to protect women and girls from gender-based sexual violence and to support their reproductive health.

CHAPTER 7:

CIDA Photo: Bruce Paton

The Psychosocial Impact

"It is very difficult to live in war. You just wait for the moment you will die."

—Sanel, age 12, who lost an arm to a shell in Mostar, Bosnia

In times of war, children witness and experience terrible atrocities. The physical, sexual and emotional violence to which they are exposed shatters their world. War undermines the very foundations of children's lives—destroying their homes, splintering their communities and breaking down their trust in adults. Psychosocial support is essential to children's recovery, growth and development and should be included from the outset in relief programmes. Psychosocial support consists of structured activities designed to restore children's psychological and social development and to mitigate the adverse effects of armed conflict.

The word 'psychosocial' simply underlines the dynamic relationship between psychological and social effects, each continually influencing the other. 'Psychological effects' are those which affect emotion, behaviour, thoughts, memory, learning ability, perceptions and understanding. 'Social effects' refer to altered relationships due to death, separation, estrangement and other losses, family and community breakdown, damage to social values and customary practices and the destruction of social facilities and services. Social

effects also extend to the economic dimension, as many individuals and families become destitute through the material and economic devastation of conflict, losing social status and place in their familiar social network.[9]

Each child reacts differently to the impact of armed conflict. Their response depends on their age, gender, personality type, personal and family history, cultural background and experience, as well as on the nature and duration of the event. Stress can reveal itself in a wide range of symptoms, including increased separation anxiety, developmental delays, sleep disturbances, nightmares, decreased appetite, withdrawn behaviour, and a lack of interest in play. Younger children can have learning difficulties; older children and adolescents can show anxious or aggressive behaviour and depression.

The 1996 Machel Report called for psychosocial support for children to be a pillar of all humanitarian assistance.

Psychosocial support should build on children's resilience. Experience has shown that with supportive caregivers and secure communities, most children will achieve a sense of healing. Recovery programmes should recognise children's rights and their developmental needs, and should be guided by an understanding of, and a respect for, local culture and traditions. Cultural perceptions of sexual violence can have an impact on the provision of psychosocial support for survivors. The stigma associated with rape and sexual violence—for girls and especially boys—may make it difficult to mobilise the existing care system. Where they exist, local traditions such as cleansing ceremonies for rape survivors should be supported. Programmes should ensure wide-ranging participation from local authorities, communities, parents and from children themselves.

Family separation has been shown to be especially detrimental to the well-being of war-affected children. Governments, donors and practitioners must give priority to family reunification. Further, in situations where families have few resources, residential centres that can offer food, health and education services for children living in the institution may indirectly encourage the separation of children from their families. Institutionalisation has been shown to be detrimental to the social and psychological development of children, isolating them from their communities and increasing their marginalisation. At a time when children need to rebuild their trust in adults and develop sustainable relationships, institutions cannot provide the long-term love and nurturing they need. Parents, teachers and community networks must be mobilised to provide the continuity, trust and stability children need for recovery.

Humanitarian workers, journalists and other practitioners should protect children from the pain that may result from inappropriate interventions or interviews that lead children to recount or relive the worst moments of their lives. This can leave children even more distraught or vulnerable, especially in the absence of continuing support or follow-up.

Building on the work of the International Save the Children Alliance (ISCA), UNICEF convened a series of workshops in 1997 and 1998 to develop consensus on a set of guiding principles for psychosocial programming. These principles have been reflected in humanitarian responses in conflict-affected countries and in training packages developed by UNHCR and ISCA. Psychosocial programmes were given increased priority by donors in the emergency response for Kosovo. The principles influenced a 1998 UNICEF and Government of Rwanda evaluation of the trauma programme in that country and are now being used to strengthen the design and application of UNICEF's psychosocial programmes.

Psychosocial programmes should help bring stability and routines into children's lives as soon as possible. Healing is fostered by a sense of purpose, self-esteem, identity and security. Organisations such as the International Save the Children Alliance, the International Rescue Committee, and the Christian Children's Fund have developed programmes to help children establish a sense of normalcy through daily routines—such as going to school, preparing food, washing clothes and working in the fields. They also offer intellectual and emotional stimulation through structured group activities such as play, sports, drawing and storytelling. A key principle of psychosocial programmes is that children must participate in the planning of community-based relief, recovery and reconstruction programmes. This not only increases the relevance of these programmes but also helps children rebuild working relationships with adults, and strengthens their sense of identity and self worth. Other key principles include respect for local culture, reuniting and strengthening families, and mobilising local care systems.

Recommendations:

1. Psychosocial support must be a central part of child protection in all phases of emergency and reconstruction.

2. Governments, donors and relief organisations should prevent the institutionalisation of children and prioritise the reunification of children with their families and communities. Arrangements such as foster care and peer group living need to be linked with appropriate community, social, cultural or religious networks that promote child protection.

3. Children with special needs, such as child soldiers, should receive support within the broader context of reintegration programmes for all war-affected children. Sensitivity to special protection issues affecting girls must be a priority for agencies and communities.

4. Psychosocial programmes should involve a range of players, including relevant government ministries, donors, UN agencies, NGOs, other civil society groups, teachers, health professionals, children and families.

CHAPTER 8:

CIDA Photo: Stephanie Colvey

Education for Survival

"For six years, my school has been a railroad car. It is difficult to learn. There is no glass in the windows. During summer it's impossible to stay cool, and during winter it's impossible to stay warm. During winter I wear all of my clothes: two pair of pants, a shirt, a jacket and a hat. I don't have any gloves, so it's terrible to write. After one or two lessons in the cold, the teachers usually let us leave."[40]

—17-year-old Ina, Azerbaijan

Schools are targets in conflict situations. In rural areas, the school is often the only substantial permanent structure, making it highly susceptible to shelling, closure or looting. In Mozambique, during the conflict, an estimated 45 per cent of primary schools were destroyed.[41] Teachers are likely to be threatened because they are important community members and tend to be active politically. Salaries are rarely paid and the supply of materials is often slow or erratic. Overall, fear and disruption make it difficult to create an atmosphere conducive to learning.

Yet education is vital during armed conflicts, offering a sense of continuity and stability for children and for the whole community. Education gives shape and structure to children's lives. When everything around is in chaos, schools can be a haven of security that is vital to the well-being of war-affected children and their communities.

Education needs to be supported in the first wave of the humanitarian and emergency response. In the first months of a crisis situation and before more formal schooling is reinstated, children can benefit from informal educational and recreational activities. This support can provide the structure and daily routines so essential for children's emotional and psychosocial well-being. Education can also be used during conflict to reach children with life-saving messages about health and physical safety. Children who have been directly involved in combat, who have lost limbs or who have been the victims of sexual violence should not be separated from the community and companionship of their peers. Integration into the 'classroom' may be a child's first step towards recovery.

> ***The 1996 Machel Report urged increased protection of educational facilities in conflict situations. It encouraged donors to support education as part of humanitarian assistance. It recommended increased educational support for displaced children and adolescents, and specialised training for teachers working in conflict situations.***

Education is beginning to be established as the fourth pillar of humanitarian assistance, along with food, shelter and health care. The Norwegian Refugee Council has been an active and influential advocate in achieving that goal. And education is now included in UN Consolidated Inter-Agency Appeals.

Innovative approaches to emergency education have been taken. Many more education programmes now incorporate life skills to help children cope in a dangerous environment. Some of these programmes address landmine awareness, HIV/AIDS prevention, human rights and peace education. One of the most significant lessons learned from these programmes is that emergency education 'kits' can help quick-start education in emergencies, but only if they are delivered with appropriate training and support. As soon as possible, standardised kits should be replaced with locally selected and procured supplies.

The centrality of education in community life is nowhere more evident than in refugee camps. Without waiting for international aid, refugee communities often use any available means to set up classrooms and begin instruction. In Guinea, teachers within the Liberia and Sierra Leone refugee population developed a curriculum and started a school programme that quickly grew to 12,000 students. With help from UNHCR and the International Rescue Committee (IRC), the programme now enrols over 75,000 children.[42] Nevertheless, some host governments are reluctant to allow international agencies to establish education programmes for fear that this may encourage refugee families to remain permanently in their countries. Denying elementary education for refugee children contravenes the Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Internally displaced children face different barriers. Their access to education is often complicated by a lack of resources and the absence of proper identification documents to enroll in government schools. Their circumstances reinforce the necessity for educational activity to be included in emergency relief and humanitarian assistance.

In the absence of formal schooling, communities have developed innovative and non-formal teaching methods that may depart from standard curricula. This can be a positive catalyst to promote social justice and human rights in the education system, especially because education systems in war-torn communities often reflect the dynamics of the conflict and the injustices that take place outside of the classroom. With support and guidance, stereotypes can be dismantled inside the classroom. Promoting tolerance in educational approaches for displaced children requires a collaborative effort—with cooperation from the host country, advice and assistance from international agencies, and the full participation of the local community.

In virtually all instances, donors have responded more quickly to the need for primary schools during emergencies but have been slower to invest in education for adolescents. Many adolescents in war-torn, poverty-stricken countries have not mastered basic literacy and numeracy skills and are in need of accelerated learning or 'catch up' programmes. The lack of educational or vocational training leaves adolescents unprepared for eventual re-integration into the workforce and can increase their vulnerability to military recruitment or sexual exploitation. Out-of-school children often receive less support.

Bound as they are by discriminatory practices that can keep them out of school, adolescent girls are even more marginalised within emergency education programmes. But education, especially literacy and numeracy, is precisely what girls need during and after armed conflict. Education can help prepare adolescent girls for the new roles and responsibilities they are often obliged to take on in conflict situations.

It is essential that education programmes be viewed as a central part of the continuum from emergency relief to reintegration and development. This is especially important in protracted civil wars where education is not, and cannot be, merely a short-term emergency measure.

Recommendations:

1. Educational support should include life skills training, landmine awareness, HIV/AIDS prevention, human rights, peace education and psychosocial support in the core curriculum.

2. Inter-agency collaboration (UNICEF, UNESCO, UNHCR) and cooperation with governments and NGOs should be strengthened to consolidate immediate and long-term responses to education in emergencies.

3. Specialized accelerated learning programmes for adolescents should form a key part of the emergency educational response.

4. Parents, the community and young people should be involved in curriculum planning and development to ensure that teaching materials are locally relevant and also child-rights based, giving full attention to gender-sensitivity and ethnic and religious tolerance.

CHAPTER 9:

CIDA Photo: Roger LaRoyea

Landmines and Unexploded Ordnance

"We were playing. We were playing." [43]

—Khaliq, age 14, in the hospital recovering from the loss of his leg after stepping on a landmine near Kandahar, Afghanistan

Children in some 80 countries live daily with the threat of uncleared landmines. Unexploded ordnance (UXO) is an added danger: bombs, shells and grenades that fail to detonate on impact can be triggered decades later. The threat to children is direct. While most mines are hidden killers and impossible to see, 'butterfly mines' and brightly coloured shuttle cock-shaped cluster bombs hold a deadly attraction for children. Anti-personnel mines are designed to attack adults—but primarily to maim them rather than to kill. For the smaller anatomies of children, however, the explosion of even the smallest mine can be lethal.

Landmines threaten child rights in many ways. When access to schools, clinics and water sources is unsafe, children are denied their right to survival and development, to education and to health care. Children are at risk when carrying out their daily tasks: cultivating fields, herding animals or searching for firewood. Many poor

children also work as scavengers and gather landmines and UXO as scrap metal to sell in the local market. Children's right to adequate nutrition and living standards is compromised when fields, pastures, factories and workplaces cannot be used. When play areas, sports facilities and cultural centres are unsafe, children's right to recreation and cultural activities go unfilled.

Even when children themselves are not primary victims, landmines and unexploded ordnance have an overwhelming impact on their lives. When children's parents or caretakers become victims they are less able to provide support and care for their children.

> ***The 1996 Machel Report called for a world-wide ban on mines and for regular reports on progress in enacting national legislation. It also called for more resources for landmine action, particularly from countries and companies that have profited from the sale of landmines.***

The International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL), launched in 1992, is a global coalition of more than 1,400 NGOs active in more than 85 countries. Their effort, together with like-minded governments and UN agencies, culminated in the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on their Destruction that opened for signature in Ottawa in 1997. In March 1999, the Convention achieved the 40 ratifications necessary to become international law. As of 10 August 2000, 138 countries had signed or acceded to the convention and 101 had ratified it. Already, eight of the 12 major producers and exporters of landmines have ceased production of these indiscriminate weapons.[44]

The Ottawa Convention requires States parties to completely destroy their stockpiles within four years and to destroy all anti-personnel landmines in areas under their jurisdiction within 10 years. So far, around 20 million landmines have been destroyed from the stockpiles of 50 countries, but around 250 million anti-personnel mines still remain in at least 105 countries.[45] Mine clearance is underway in dozens of countries and the number of mine casualties has dropped in some of the most seriously affected, including Afghanistan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cambodia and Mozambique.[46] In Cambodia, for example, 417 landmine casualties were recorded from January to May 2000, compared to 634 in the same period in 1999.[47]

Humanitarian mine action programmes combine awareness, surveys and assessments, clearance, and survivor rehabilitation. Although the UN policy on mine action calls for a greater integration of military and humanitarian priorities, mine action in a peacekeeping environment has focused almost exclusively on military priorities. The importance of integrating humanitarian mine action into peacekeeping was shown in Kosovo in 1999 when UNICEF, in coordination with the UN Mine Action Coordination Centre, secured KFOR's commitment to give priority to demining schools. Through the work of mine clearance, NGOs and other agencies, 727 schools and a number of free play areas for children were demined by the end of November 1999, and this work continues.[48]

Formed in 1997, the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) coordinates all aspects of mine action activities among UN agencies and cooperates closely with mine-affected countries, donors and NGOs. As national mine programmes weigh many priorities, the rights of mine-affected communities and their children must hold a central place. In practical terms, this means paying close attention to refugee and IDP flows, to ensure the safe access of families to their homes, to health services, water points, schools, farms and play areas. The costs of mines and their removal are highly variable, and even a few mines in a populated area can threaten lives and severely disrupt economic activities. In Mozambique,

landmines prevented more than 20,000 people from returning to their villages in the Manhiça valley for seven years. When the valley was cleared in 1996, only eight mines were discovered.[49]

National mine action programmes must give mine-affected communities a voice in setting priorities. Mine awareness programmes need to involve communities in determining who is most at risk, the kinds of activities that pose dangers and the main source of the threats. UNICEF is the lead UN agency for mine awareness and, in cooperation with other partners, has prepared international guidelines and a comprehensive package of mine-awareness training materials. While these generic materials include references to children, more needs to be done to expand and integrate the child-focused elements.

Children who survive mine and UXO injuries face severe medical problems. Comprehensive treatment and rehabilitation for survivors can cost up to $1,000 in poor developing countries where the average GNP per person is less than a few hundred dollars a year.[50] Worldwide, there are some 300,000 landmine survivors.[51] In September 1998, the Red Cross, UNICEF, WHO and the Government of Switzerland issued the Berne Manifesto, calling for the rights of child survivors to be respected. It called for appropriate physical care and rehabilitation, psychosocial counselling, education, vocational training, and reintegration into communities. Much of this remains beyond the financial capacity of both families and affected nations.

The Ottawa Convention mandates international cooperation to end the landmine threat, but aid has been slow to arrive. In 1999, according to the UN Mine Action Investment Database, 11 donor countries and the European Commission provided a total of $168 million for mine action,[52] far short of the $1 billion a year recommended by the United States.[53]

The Ottawa Convention is now part of international law, and far fewer landmines are being produced and deployed since its entry into force. Yet children continue to be killed and maimed by landmines each day, and resources for mine clearance and for the support and rehabilitation of victims are inadequate. With sufficient determination and resources, countries should be able to eliminate all landmines in their territories within the 10-year time-frame set by the Ottawa Convention.

Recommendations:

1. States that have not yet ratified or acceded to the Ottawa Convention must do so and all ratifying countries must quickly ensure effective implementation, including through the enactment of national legislation and the inclusion of penal sanctions for violations.

2. Donor countries must provide far more support, both bilaterally and internationally, for mine action in affected countries, including through contributions to the United Nations Voluntary Trust Fund for Assistance in Mine Clearance.

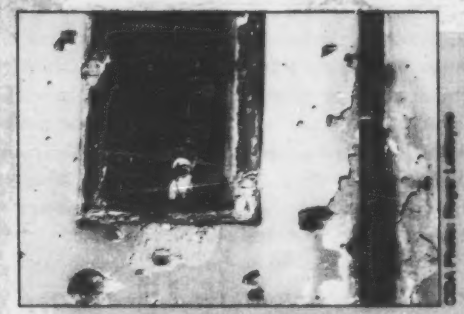
3. The Security Council should hold an open debate on operational mine action in a peacekeeping environment, with a focus on integrating military and humanitarian priorities and with respect to specific operations, particularly in Africa.

4. The rights of children should hold a central place in surveys and assessments, planning and implementing mine action programmes. To develop policy and practice in this area, UNICEF and UNMAS should convene a technical workshop with relevant international agencies and NGOs.

5. Companies and countries that have used landmines and unexploded ordnance or profited from their sale should be identified and required to contribute funds for mine action. Leaders responsible for causing civilian deaths and injuries and economic damage through the use of landmines should be held accountable for their actions under international law.

6. A world-wide moratorium on the use of cluster munitions should be implemented and consideration given to the immediate and long-term humanitarian consequences of these weapons, especially on children.

CHAPTER 10:



Light Weapons, Mass Destruction

"I did learn some things when I was with the rebels. I learnt how to shoot, how to lay anti-personnel mines and how to live on the run. I especially knew how to use an AK-47 twelve-inch, which I could dismantle in less than one minute. When I turned 12 they gave me an RPG, because I had proved myself in battle."[54]

— abducted 19-year-old soldier, Pularo District, northern Uganda

Carol Bellamy, Executive Director of UNICEF, has called attention to the affects of small arms on children in war-torn countries, "More than tanks, missiles and mortars, light weapons have terrorised children during wars and after. Small arms have probably extinguished more young lives than they have ever protected. Unless their production, transfer and use is tightly controlled, they will inevitably become pernicious tools of destruction."[55]

Today's weapons of mass destruction are not nuclear or biological; they are the estimated one half billion small arms and light weapons that fuel conflicts around the world—1 for every 12 people.[56] These lethal weapons take many different forms. They include revolvers and self-loading pistols, assault rifles, sub-machine guns, grenades, anti-personnel landmines and light machine guns.[57] While many of these are surplus stocks, new weapons are still being produced in vast numbers. In 1999, close to 400 companies in 64 countries were manufacturing small arms and light weapons—a 20% increase in the number of countries since the mid 1990s.[58] At least 23 developing countries are also producing small arms, 13 of which are exporting them.[59] Insurgent and opposition groups in several nations even have the capability to produce simple small calibre weapons of their own. The precise magnitude of the international small arms and light weapons trade is not known; however, the legal trade is estimated is worth some $ 6 billion while the illegal trade is valued somewhere between $2 to $10 billion.[60]

The 1996 Machel Report pointed to the many dangers of small arms, noting that these weapons had increasingly drawn children in warfare. It called upon governments to control the flow of arms to conflict zones, particularly where there was evidence of the gross violation of children's rights.

Inexpensive and easy to use, small arms are capable of transforming any local conflict into a full-scale massacre. They often prolong conflicts, intensify suffering and obstruct post-conflict reconstruction processes. Their ready availability and circulation into communities at peace can lead to vicious cycles of violence and insecurity. More alarming still, these weapons are so light and simple to use that it is very easy to turn young children into soldiers. Even a 10-year-old can strip and reassemble an AK-47. One pull of the trigger on an assault rifle can fire a burst of up to 35 rounds.[61]

While small arms and light weapons kill thousands of children each year, millions more suffer from their indirect consequences. Most children who have suffered direct attacks by light weapons or who have witnessed such attacks experience emotional trauma. As a result, children may suffer from developmental delays, learning difficulties, serious depression and, in the worst circumstances, suicide.

Children become vulnerable to recruitment and attack, especially when walking long distances to school. Girls are less likely to go to school in such high-risk environments. Fear of armed violence often prevents farmers from tending their fields or transporting their harvest to market. In many rural areas, women trek long distances in search of food, fuel and water. Fearful of armed attack, they are constrained by time and scope in engaging in these daily labours. With fewer goods on the market, food prices skyrocket beyond the means of most families. Many children die as a direct result of diminished food intake, while others are unable to resist common childhood diseases and infections.

Humanitarian and peacekeeping personnel working to protect children in conflict situations have come increasingly under fire from small arms and light weapons. This makes the protection of children and the delivery of humanitarian assistance more difficult and costly. And when the risks to delivering assistance and providing protection become untenable, humanitarian organisations may be forced to suspend operations, putting the lives and well-being of children caught in such desperate situations at further peril.

To achieve a significant reduction in the availability of small arms in the hands of children or anyone else, both the proliferation of these weapons and their impact on children must be addressed.

A critical opportunity for the removal of weapons occurs when armed groups are being disbanded. All peace agreements should include detailed plans for demobilisation and for the collection and destruction of weapons. The disarmament of armed civilians is also a necessary step to peaceful coexistence. A variety of different programmes have been tried—guns for food, or assistance, or cash—but in general, weapons-collection programmes need to be approached holistically, dealing with development and security issues, including the need for a safe environment. Alongside all these activities, it is important to encourage an anti-weapons climate of opinion. In Albania, NGOs organised social activities for Kosovar and Albanian young people under the banner of 'Don't Let Guns Kill Our Dreams'. In Croatia, UNICEF's 'Mine and Weapons Awareness Education' programme highlights the danger of having weapons kept at home within the reach of children. In a number of African countries NGOs run education campaigns on the dangers of weapons while also working to reduce gun-dependency and to create a culture of peace.

The international community has taken up this issue. In 2001, the United Nations is sponsoring a Conference on the Illicit Trafficking in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All its Aspects. This conference will be an important opportunity to focus on child protection and child soldiers. It is important that the conference address a wide range of issues, including the control of legal transfers, State-to-State transfers and the humanitarian and developmental impact of small arms and light weapons.

In addition, several regional and sub-regional organisations have established codes of conduct to stem the flow of small arms at the regional level. These initiatives, including those taken by the Council of Europe, ECOWAS, the OSCE, the OAS, the OAU, SADC and the EU should be supported and expanded to the global level. And the government of Mali initiated the West African Moratorium on the Export, Import and Manufacture of Light Weapons, bringing together suppliers and recipients to fashion a concrete and comprehensive strategy for putting in place a moratorium on light weapons.

Other encouraging developments taken by civil society include the emergence of an International NGO coalition—the Action Network on Small Arms (IANSA). This network brings together more than 100 NGOs and aims at enhancing human security by promoting NGO action against the proliferation and misuse of small arms. In 1997, fifteen recipients of the Nobel Peace Prize, led by former Costa Rican President Oscar Arias, developed an International Code of Conduct on Arms Transfers, which seeks to prevent the transfer and use of arms by parties to conflicts that have violated international human rights standards.

Recommendations:

1. Arms embargoes should be imposed, monitored and enforced in situations where civilians are targeted, where widespread and systematic violations of humanitarian and human rights law are committed, and where children are recruited as soldiers. Embargo violations should be criminalised and prosecuted.

2. Building on existing regional and subregional initiatives, governments and intergovernmental organisations should draw up binding international instruments and legislation to address legal and illegal arms flows, production and stockpiling.

3 All peace agreements should set clear provisions for disarming, demobilising and reintegrating soldiers, including child soldiers. Institutional arrangements for disarmament and the safe and timely disposal of arms and ammunitions should be made explicit and be fully funded and supported.

4 States, UN bodies and civil society should promote a culture of peace through peace education programmes. Children and their families should be educated about the dangers of small arms and light weapons, and the popular entertainment culture that glorifies gun use should be challenged.

5 Civil society should be supported in playing an important role in arms prevention, reduction and awareness raising and in monitoring government policy.

CHAPTER 11:

CIDA Photo: Roger LaRoche

Protecting Children from Sanctions

"There is no use going to school because life is so hard. I'm going to help my father."[62]

— Mohammed, 13 years old, Basra, southern Iraq

Like armed conflict, the imposition of sanctions has had a serious impact on the health, development and lives of children. Sanctions may seem preferable to all-out warfare, but to many of the most vulnerable people in embargoed countries, the effects are as devastating. Trade restrictions cause serious shortages of many civilian-related items, creating enormous economic hardship. They accelerate the deterioration of infrastructure essential to health, including water, sanitation and electrical power. As a result, families, and especially children, experience extreme deprivation, malnutrition and poor health. To date, an estimated half a million Iraqi children have died during the current sanctions regime.[63]

Sanctions have been used as the centrepiece of efforts to repel aggression, restore democracy, condemn human rights abuses, and punish regimes harbouring terrorists and others charged with international crimes.[64] During the 1990s, United Nations sanctions were imposed against Haiti, Libya, Yugoslavia, Iraq, Somalia,

Angola, Rwanda, Liberia Sudan, Sierra Leone, Afghanistan and Ethiopia/Eritrea. The UN Security Council's sanctions regime against Iraq is its longest running and most severe and comprehensive. Whereas sanctions have traditionally been used against States, the Security Council has recently imposed sanctions against non-state actors: the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) and the Taliban in Afghanistan.

> ***The 1996 Machel Report called for the international community to cease imposing comprehensive economic sanctions without obligatory and enforceable mechanisms for monitoring their impact on children and other vulnerable groups***

The fact is that sanctions affect the poor, not the powerful. "People have been harmed, not regimes," stated the Executive Office of the UN Secretary-General, on the effect—and not the intent—of many recent sanctions regimes.[65] In principle and in practice, sanctions should precisely target the vulnerabilities of political and or military leadership and those responsible for egregious crimes against children. Targeted or so-called 'smart sanctions' could include arms embargoes, freezing individual or national assets and suspending specific economic transactions, communications and air links. The report of the Secretary-General, *We the Peoples: The Role of the United Nations in the 21st Century*, outlines alternative strategies explored by a number of governments, including Switzerland and Germany, to design targeted financial sanctions and to make arms embargoes and other forms of targeted sanctions more effective. In April 2000, the Security Council established an informal working group to develop recommendations on improving the effectiveness of United Nations sanctions, including a focus on their unintended impact and on targeted sanctions.

Recent initiatives by the Security Council, the Angola Sanctions Committee and its Panel of Experts, have improved the enforcement of targeted sanctions against UNITA which were first imposed in 1998. In March 2000, Canadian Ambassador to the United Nations, Robert Fowler, issued a report to the UN Sanctions Committee naming governments and individuals that were allegedly in breach of these sanctions.[66] Subsequently, in co-ordination with the diamond industry, the Security Council set up a monitoring mechanism to investigate alleged violations.[67] This initiative marked the first time governments, industry and the UN joined efforts to ensure that targeted sanctions achieved their political objectives, while trying to minimize the humanitarian consequences for women and children. Targeted sanctions can help avoid what the Executive Office of the Secretary General has called "the major humanitarian suffering and severe social dislocation that results from the imposition and effective enforcement of comprehensive sanctions regimes."[68]

In recent years, various initiatives to assess the deleterious impact of sanctions on children have been taken. In January 1999, the President of the Security Council called for the sanctions committees to monitor, throughout the sanctions regime, the humanitarian impact of sanctions on vulnerable groups, including children. This view was reaffirmed by the Council in July 2000, when the Council expressed its willingness to take appropriate steps to minimise these consequences. A number of United Nations bodies and NGOs have carried out assessments of the humanitarian impact of sanctions. In 1997, UNICEF completed a study on sanctions and proposed a set of principles and recommendations to protect children from harm.[69] In 1998, the Inter-Agency Standing Committee established a reference group, drawing on the expertise of a number of United Nations bodies, including OCHA, other humanitarian organisations and NGOs, to improve indicators used to assess and monitor the impact of sanctions on vulnerable groups.

The evidence from these assessments shows indisputable damage to children, yet debates on issues of causality and responsibility continue to undermine prompt and adequate humanitarian responses. Irrespective of these debates, the conclusion to be drawn is clear: children will always suffer when comprehensive sanctions are imposed.

Recommendations:

1. The international community should cease to impose comprehensive sanctions.

2. Sanctions must be selectively and thoughtfully targeted to avoid damage to vulnerable populations and especially women and children. No sanctions regime should be implemented unless the Security Council is persuaded, by a rigorous assessment, that such a regime will not have a negative impact on children.

3. When sanctions are applied, the Security Council must have clearly defined objectives and criteria for termination. Sanctions should be lifted gradually as the objectives are satisfied. Since many of the effects of sanctions, particularly the impact on health, may only become manifest in the long term, no sanctions regime should be allowed to continue indefinitely.

4. UNICEF, and other UN and NGO partners, should promote the identification of a set of agreed common indicators to monitor the impact of sanctions on children before, during and after their imposition. All monitoring should include an assessment of the impact on regional neighbours and major trading partners.

5. The Security Council and its sanctions committees should improve their transparency and accountability through public reporting, debate, monitoring and periodic reviews.

6. Corporations should contribute to the strict implementation of sanctions legitimately established by the international community in full respect for human rights and the rights of the child.

CHAPTER 12:

UN DPI Photo # 203225 C

Raising Standards for Child Protection

"Try to imagine, how could 29,000 people live in approximately two kilometres square with no yards, gardens or playgrounds."[70]

—Dawwn, Nahr el Bared refugee camp, Lebanon

Through the Convention on the Rights of the Child, now ratified by all countries in the world except the United States and Somalia, the international community has declared its moral and political commitment to safeguard children as a 'zone of peace' and to make explicit children's right to protection when conflicts threaten. The Convention bridges relevant standards enshrined in humanitarian and human rights law. It stands as a reference and a reaffirmation of human values and norms fundamental to safeguarding children's rights in all societies. At the national level, these standards should guide legislation, policy and practice for children's protection. Any purported mitigating circumstances through which governments or their opponents seek to justify

infringements of children's human rights during armed conflict must be seen by the international community for what they are: reprehensible and intolerable.

> ***The 1996 Machel Report called for the universal ratification of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and for governments to adopt national legislation to ensure effective implementation. It called for specialised training on humanitarian and human rights law, and for all international bodies working in conflict zones to establish procedures for prompt, confidential and objective reporting of violations.***

This review highlights a number of important developments that have strengthened the protection of children's rights under international law and the mechanisms that uphold them. In 1998, Mr. Francis Deng, the United Nations Representative of the Secretary-General on Internally Displaced Persons, released a set of *Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement.* The Principles are informed by international human rights, humanitarian and refugee law, and they provide a normative framework for the protection of internally displaced children. In March 1999, the Ottawa Convention on Landmines became international law. In June 1999, the International Labour Organisation adopted Convention No. 182, defining the use of children in armed conflict as one of the worst forms of child labour. And in May 2000, the General Assembly ratified an optional protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child establishing 18 years as the minimum age for participation in conflict.

The International Criminal Tribunals established for the former Yugoslavia and for Rwanda have made great strides towards ending impunity for violations of children's and women's rights. In Cambodia, a national war crimes tribunal, with participation of international judges and prosecutors, is being created to establish responsibility for crimes committed during the Khmer Rouge regime. A Special Court is also being established for Sierra Leone, with national and international judges, to try those who bore the greatest responsibility for atrocities committed during that country's civil war. The impunity granted by the Lomé agreement was never endorsed by the United Nations and should not be used to absolve those responsible for the death and mutilation of thousands of children. And in July 1998, the Statute for an International Criminal Court was adopted, ensuring progress in the fight against impunity for war crimes, including those committed against children and women.

These developments reflect a trend in the mobilisation of wide support for strengthening the application of international standards for the protection of children's rights. Coalitions have been formed, birth registration campaigns undertaken and non-state actors have volunteered to adhere to international standards. These encouraging steps hint at the enormous potential of international standards to become a living tool with which to ensure that children are seriously respected as 'zones of peace' and that their lives are improved in concrete and sustainable ways.

Yet the reality for children in conflict has become alarmingly more treacherous. As the 1996 Machel Report documented and the present review clearly confirms, war puts at risk every right of the child, including: the right to life; the right to a family environment; the right to essential care and assistance; the right to health, to food and to education. International standards and their enforcement are the strongest defence against impunity for child rights violations in armed conflict. Yet, they will only be effective if and when they are widely known, understood and implemented by everyone, including policy makers, military and security forces, UN personnel, humanitarian organisations, civil society and children themselves.

Specialised training is essential to transform this normative framework into national and organisational policy and, ultimately, into concrete guidelines, internal procedures and practice. The Secretary-General's bulletin on the observance by UN forces of international humanitarian law[71] highlights the importance of training on international standards for international peacekeepers. A number of countries, including Canada, Germany, Ghana, Norway and Sweden, have already begun to incorporate training on child rights and gender in their national programmes. These are encouraging steps. Support for their universal implementation is urged.

The translation of international legal instruments into national and local languages can help promote a culture of human rights. In Rwanda, for example, Save the Children Fund-US, Haguruka (a local NGO) and UNICEF supported the development of an official Kinyarwanda version of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. This version has been adopted into Rwandan law and popularised through radio, drama and print materials.

An effective international system for protecting children's rights requires prompt, efficient and objective monitoring. The international community must respond to child rights violations. Where protection of children is concerned, much broader participation in the monitoring and reporting of abuses is required. While it is primarily governments that are responsible for ensuring the safeguarding of children's rights, relief agencies are particularly well placed to monitor and report on the situation of children and the violation of their rights. Their reports can provide vital information to assist the international community in assessing conflict situations and developing appropriate responses.

In his 1999 report to the Security Council, the UN Secretary-General highlighted the need to reconcile the delivery of humanitarian relief with the defence of human rights. Appropriate public or confidential channels should be established nationally and internationally through which to report on matters of grave concern relating to children. The High Commissioner for Human Rights, national institutions and national ombudspersons, international human rights organisations and professional associations should be actively utilised in this regard. It is the responsibility of those who protect children's rights to engage the media in the coverage of the infringement of those rights. Increased monitoring and reporting on the part of humanitarian organisations must be accompanied by quicker, more transparent and more effective use of such information by the international bodies active in the field of children's rights.

States parties to the Convention on the Rights of the Child are responsible for all children within their territory without discrimination. In accepting the role of the Committee on the Rights of the Child in monitoring the implementation of the Convention, States parties have also recognised that the protection of children is not just a national issue, but a legitimate concern of the international community. This is especially important since many of the most serious violations of children's rights take place in situations of conflict where there may be no functioning national government, or where its capacity is too limited to ensure the protection of its children and prevent the violation of their rights.

It is important to promote commitment by non-state actors to abide by international standards and ensure their implementation. To this end, non-state entities should be urged to make formal commitments to protect children's rights as set out in the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and other relevant treaties. There are encouraging precedents here. In 1995 in Sudan, for example, several combatant groups became the first non-state entities to commit to abide by the provisions of the CRC, while more recently the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Liberacion (FARC) in Colombia has agreed to end its recruitment of children younger than 15.

If the CRC were to be fully implemented during armed conflicts, this would go a long way towards protecting children. The standards exist—it is political will that appears to be lacking.

Recommendations:

1. Human rights treaty bodies should enhance their focus on child rights in conflict situations in reviewing government reports. Following its thematic discussion on children in armed conflict, the Committee on the Rights of the Child should undertake a comprehensive overview of measures undertaken by States parties and other relevant actors to promote children's rights in armed conflict, as well as of achievements made and challenges encountered in this endeavour.

2. The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights must be strengthened so that it can respond more effectively to violations of child rights. To improve child rights monitoring in armed conflict, all relevant agencies should promote the development of effective procedures for prompt, confidential and objective reporting.

3. States should sign and ratify the International Criminal Court Statute, the Optional Protocols to the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the International Labour Organisation's Convention No. 182 and adopt national legislative and other relevant measures to ensure the fulfilment of children's rights.

4. The international community should examine the responsibility and culpability of external states that support non-state actors who commit gross violations of children's rights. This support should be considered a serious criminal offence.

5. Wherever gross violations of children's right occur, the accountability of those who are directly or indirectly responsible should be established under relevant international or national provisions. Where national legislation exists it should be implemented, and where it does not, States should enact relevant legislative measures and consider, whenever necessary, the conclusion of bilateral or multilateral agreements.

CHAPTER 13:

CP Photo Archive: John Moore

A Children's Agenda for Peace and Security

"I wish that nothing was destroyed and that everybody could live like they lived before — without bombing and destroying houses."[72]

—Jelena, age 9, Kosovo

Obtaining and maintaining global peace and security is the central concern of the international community and the main responsibility of the Security Council. The safety and well being of individuals— that is, human security — has become both a new measure of global security and a new impetus for global action. Human security and national security are two sides of the same global security coin. Ensuring children's centrality to this agenda means strengthening the Council's capacity to address new, non-traditional threats to their security such as civil conflict, mass displacement, small arms proliferation, gross human rights abuse,

failures of governance and the rule of law, and abject deprivation. Without Council action to support humanitarian goals and to protect human rights, children and women caught in situations of armed conflict are left increasingly in a security void.

As a response to these changing dynamics, Secretary-General Boutros Boutros Ghali's "An Agenda for Peace" established the need for the United Nations to link humanitarian action and the protection of human rights with peacemaking, peacekeeping and peace-building. Although this agenda emphasised the aspects of UN peace support operations relating to the protection of civilians, up until 1999, no such UN mandate had yet made any specific reference to children.

> ***The 1996 Machel Report highlighted the relevance of child rights to the international peace and security agenda and recommended that the Security Council be kept continually aware of child specific concerns in its actions to resolve conflicts, to keep or to enforce peace or to implement peace agreements.***

Recent international actions to protect children in conflict situations have bestowed unprecedented political legitimacy on the relevance of child protection to international peace and security.[73] Through its resolutions on children in armed conflict and the protection of civilians, the Security Council established a political framework for systematically assessing child protection in country-specific situations and across thematic areas of concern. Actions have been taken to improve protection and assistance for refugee and displaced children and women; to establish child protection advisers in peacekeeping operations; to stop the use of children as soldiers; and to tackle the excessive proliferation of small arms and light weapons. These have collectively resulted in a much higher standard for protecting children and women in a peacekeeping environment. They have also shown a new way for UN peace support operations to leverage the strength of operational agencies present in the country before, during and after a conflict takes place.

Regional and sub-regional arrangements have continued to expand their activities with respect to humanitarian concerns and conflict. Following the West African Conference on War-Affected Children, ECOWAS set out a regional plan of action for the protection of children in situations of conflict, and decided to establish a child protection unit. SADC has established programmes for the armed forces of their member states in child rights, gender and protection issues. And under the leadership of Mr. Olara Otunnu, the Special Representative for Children in Armed Conflict, discussions on the protection of children in conflict situations have taken place within the OSCE, EU, OAU, OAS and the Commonwealth. These important precedents should be encouraged. Collaboration should be improved between the UN and these arrangements with increased attention to child rights and gender.

Collectively, these and other related actions dealing with the protection of civilians, conflicts in Africa, post-conflict peace-building, disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration provide the basis for international action in the following major thematic areas:

- Child-focused disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration;
- human rights violations against children and women;
- women and children as a major focus in mine clearance, mine awareness and victim assistance;
- post-conflict peace-building that includes women and rebuilds institutions that support the rule of law and safeguard child rights;
- confidence-building measures that support objective broadcasting and the free exchange of information;
- protecting children from the effects of sanctions;
- protecting humanitarian personnel and humanitarian assistance for children.

The majority of multidimensional peace support operations function in extremely volatile environments. Specific institutional mechanisms must be put in place to help ensure that the humanitarian and human rights components of these operations are not compromised by military actions. Within a peacekeeping environment, humanitarian and human rights actions must be placed within an overall, credible and balanced political strategy and Concept of Operation.

The flagrant violations of basic human rights are increasingly among the root causes of conflict and the resulting humanitarian crises. However, the procedures and mechanisms to monitor, report, prosecute and remedy such violations are woefully inadequate. The Secretary-General has called for the integration of human rights action into all early warning, peacemaking and peace-building efforts, and in the context of humanitarian operations.[74] And the recent Report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations recommends substantially enhancing the field mission planning and preparation capacity of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. The Panel further calls for the Office to be more closely involved in planning and executing the elements of peace operations that address human rights.[75]

Special attention and increased resources must be made available to monitor, verify and report child rights and gender-based violations in conflict situations. The Secretary-General's call for all agencies to establish monitoring and reporting systems that include the documentation of violations against women and children in conflict situations must be answered.[76] All UN bodies, international and national organisations with field presence should put in place proper channels to report human rights violations witnessed or serious allegations received.

As humanitarian and human rights concerns relating to children and women become increasingly central to actions in support of peace and security, relevant and timely information should be made available. In his report on the protection of civilians, the Secretary-General recommended that the Council make use of the human rights information and analysis emanating from independent treaty body experts, mechanisms of the Commission on Human Rights and other reliable sources.[77] The Council has itself encouraged the Secretary-General to include in his written reports to the Council observations relating to the protection of children in armed conflict. Where appropriate, all reports and briefings on matters relating to peace and security should be informed by relevant analysis and information from operational agencies and non-governmental organisations.

In contemporary peacekeeping environments, military and civilian personnel are taking on new functions that increase their contact with women and children. Despite repeated calls for specialised training in the child and gender dimensions of conflict, there is no international consensus on standards, policies and programme approaches. Mandatory in-service training should be provided as soon as a mission is assembled, on the responsibilities of peacekeeping personnel towards civilian communities, and especially towards women and girls. Training alone cannot guarantee the highest standards of conduct. Violations committed by peacekeeping personnel against women and children must be punished. This can be facilitated by the inclusion in peace support operations of disciplinary mechanisms, such as an Inspector General, an ombudsperson or an office created especially for that purpose, to ensure that peacekeeping personnel abide by international human rights and humanitarian standards.

Recommendations:

1. All operations to prevent conflict and build peace should include human rights monitoring and verification components. To this end, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights should be strengthened to carry out such functions in conflict situations and especially in a peacekeeping environment.

2. The internal institutional arrangements of peace support operations must ensure that the humanitarian, human rights, gender and child protection components are able to safeguard the humanitarian principles of humanity, neutrality, and impartiality in carrying out their work.

3. In reports and briefings to the Security Council, the Secretary-General should systematically elaborate on human rights and humanitarian concerns, and provide relevant information and analysis on the situation of women and children. These reports should draw from a wide variety of sources, including from operational humanitarian and human rights agencies and non-governmental organisations.

4. Just as the Security Council hears regularly from the High Commissioner for Refugees, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, the Executive Director of UNICEF, and the President of the ICRC, so it is desirable that the Security Council hear regularly from the High Commissioner for Human Rights on those matters relevant to her office and relating to children and armed conflict.

CHAPTER 14:

CIDA Photo: Roger LeMoyne

Reconstruction and Reconciliation

"The community will think that because I held a gun and did bad things I can't live among my brothers and sisters, that I have bad things in me."[78]

—Mark, ex-child soldier, Liberia

Every war-torn society faces a huge task of rebuilding—physical, economic, political, cultural and psychosocial. Conflicts destroy more than buildings and bridges; they also rip apart the cultural fabric that binds societies together. War shatters legal and moral norms, making it more difficult for families to offer security to their children. National rebuilding must therefore look beyond physical structures and establish a culture of human rights that provides a safe, nurturing environment for children and promotes social and economic policies that protect them.

The 1996 Machel Report urged that children be placed as the centre of reconstruction programmes and that youth be involved in the rebuilding of family and community life. It also recommended that reconstruction and development be integrated with emergency humanitarian assistance, and that education be a priority in all reconstruction planning.

The Convention on the Rights of the Child provides an overarching framework for actions to secure children's rights and well-being in the post-conflict transition. Although virtually every country has ratified the Convention, many have not taken the essential step of enacting national legislation to give its provisions the force of law. For countries emerging from conflicts, this must be a priority. National commissions on the rights of the child can help guide this process, as is the case in Sierra Leone. As an operating principle, young people should be seen as primary resources and encouraged to participate fully in efforts toward rebuilding their communities after conflict.

Programming and resource constraints during the transition between humanitarian relief operations and reconstruction and development must be addressed if children's rights are to be met in countries rebuilding after war. UN agencies and offices are working to develop common strategies and to improve coordination among themselves and with other partners including international NGOs and the World Bank, through the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) and with the OECD/DAC.

Funding disparities among emergencies are a major concern in relief and rebuilding. In 1970, the world agreed on the aid target of 0.7 percent of donors' GNP. If this target were met, annual ODA would be $100 billion above its current level.[79] Within ten years, this amount would ensure sufficient funds to satisfy both development and humanitarian needs.[80] Yet levels of development assistance received by sub-Saharan Africa, the region most scarred by war, declined by nearly 30 per cent between 1994 and 1998.[81] Further, Oxfam points out that there are no standards or guidelines to ensure that people in war-ravaged countries receive an adequate level of assistance.[82] In contrast, 1998 ODA for Bosnia and Herzegovina reached $237 per person. Poor countries with on-going conflicts received much less: Burundi getting $12, Afghanistan $7, and the Democratic Republic of Congo $3.[83] Children in need, wherever they are, have equal rights to assistance.

After the fighting is over, the memories of atrocities and injustices live on. These must be specifically addressed through processes of justice and community healing. Healing can be promoted in a number of ways, the most notable at the moment being the establishment of truth and reconciliation commissions. Although more than 15 countries in transition from conflict have put in place truth commissions, or an equivalent form of reconciliation depending on the culture and history of the country concerned, few have focused attention on crimes against children. Impunity for those responsible for heinous crimes against children during armed conflict has been challenged in Tribunals established for Bosnia and Herzegovina and Rwanda. The establishment of the International Criminal Court promises hope for seeking justice for abuses and atrocities committed against children.

The April 2000 World Education Forum, in Dakar, cited the impact of violence and conflict as a key obstacle to ensuring children's right to basic quality education. The groundwork for creating peaceful societies can begin in schools where the process and content of education can promote peace, tolerance, social justice, respect for human rights and the acceptance of responsibility. This is also the place where children, especially war-affected children, can learn the skills of negotiation, problem solving, critical thinking and communication. In southern Sudan, a life-skills programme addressing reconstruction as a main theme in the curricula will be distributed to schools by the end of 2000.[84]

Putting children at the centre of reconstruction means involving them as a resource. Young people must not be seen as problems or victims, but as key contributors in planning and implementing long-term solutions. Civil society organisations are vital to ensuring this. The determination of such organisations was well demonstrated in the Hague Appeal for Peace Conference of May 1999. Nearly 10,000 participants from 1,000 organisations and 100 countries launched a 50-point action plan, the Hague Agenda for Peace and Justice in the 21st Century. While international NGOs play a leading role in providing emergency support for children, national NGOs wield the largest responsibility in the aftermath of war. Resources must be given to strengthen their capacity, expand their institutions and broaden their scope.

Recommendations:

1. The OECD/DAC, in consultation with the UN and NGOs, are urged to establish criteria and guidelines to reduce disparities in resource mobilisation for war-affected children and women across conflict situations and to reduce the institutional, budgetary and functional barriers between relief assistance, reconstruction and development co-operation. These issues should be given priority consideration at the high-level consultation in 2001 on Financing for Development.

2. The UN Inter-Agency Standing Committee, together with representatives of developing countries and the NGO community, should ensure child focused policy development, programme planning and implementation.

3. Those responsible for genocide and war crimes against children must be brought to justice. Post-conflict assistance should prioritise truth and reconciliation initiatives, and the rebuilding of justice systems paying special attention to juvenile justice

CHAPTER 15:

CIDA Photo: Peter Bennett

Women and the Peace Process

"Women are making clear that they will no longer shoulder the responsibility of supporting their families and communities, serve at the forefront of anti-war movements or fight alongside male combatants without an equal opportunity to voice their ideas in official peace negotiations."[85]

—Women at the Peace Table, UNIFEM, 2000

The principles of gender equality and inclusion are fundamental values on which every attempt at democracy and peace-building must be based. This means that women must be central to and participants in any peace process. Building peace from the grass-roots level is an important aspect of women's participation. Even as they hold their families together in war and post-war conditions, women are creating and sustaining peace at the community level. These efforts should be supported financially and politically.

But in the end, women's representation at the negotiating table is the sine qua non of gender equality and inclusion. Many different strategies will be needed to guarantee their participation in the

structures, monitoring and implementation mechanisms of the peace process. Just as important, all the parties will have to be sensitised to the importance of gender issues, understand the gender dimensions of all of the substantive issues and recognise the centrality of women to the negotiations.

> ***The 1996 Machel Report demonstrated that the impact of armed conflict on children could not be understood fully without looking at the related effects on women, families and communities. The report highlighted how conflict affects girls differently from boys—whether as child soldiers, as refugees or as victims of gender-based violence and sexual exploitation. Women's role in peace-building and reconciliation was highlighted, and attention was called to the absence of effective institutional arrangements to protect women in crisis situations and to provide humanitarian support.***

Understanding the impact of conflict on women and girls is the best way to ensure that the policies and programmes created by a peace process will provide adequate protection and will guarantee women's rehabilitation and recovery. Due in large part to the insufficient understanding of the impact of armed conflict on women, a clear gap exists in their protection and, specifically, the delivery of humanitarian assistance focused on women. To help develop more appropriate responses, all surveys, reports and information on the humanitarian and human rights aspects of conflict should include gender and age analysis.

It is important to ensure that women's rights are integrated throughout the peace agreement and in the structures and mechanisms supporting post-conflict reconstruction. The constitution is the most important mechanism to guarantee human rights, including equal rights for both men and women. It provides guiding principles for establishing gender equality throughout the nation. Similarly, the post-conflict electoral system must ensure women's right to vote, their access to elections and their right to stand for public office. Women's representation within political parties ensures that their voices and issues are heard and brought to public attention. Such was the case in Burundi. Women delegates of the nineteen negotiating parties to the Burundi peace process, set out a complete agenda reflecting women's priorities. All of the parties agreed to include this agenda in the proposed peace agreement. This landmark achievement was a threefold result of the determination of Burundi women to participate in the process; support given to Burundi women by national and international women activists, the UN and NGOs; and the recognition of the central need for women's involvement, by the Facilitator of the Burundi peace process, former President Nelson Mandela.

In the context of repatriation and resettlement, it is especially important to ensure women's right to property and inheritance, since many countries have no such legal provisions. Unequal land rights leave women dependent on men, perpetuate poverty and can become a potential source of renewed conflict. The first step toward realising women's rights to land and property is to ensure that property rights, ownership and entitlement are enshrined in constitutional and statutory laws. That is an important way to defend against practices that marginalise women and deprive them of sustenance and the means of livelihood.

The mandates of preventive peace missions, peacekeeping operations and peace-building need to include provisions for women's protection and address gender issues. All peace support operations should include appropriately staffed and integrated gender units and gender advisers, and give priority to the verification of gender-based violations and the protection of women's human rights. Field operations should protect and support the delivery of humanitarian assistance for affected women and girls, and in particular for refugee and displaced women.

Due to the lack of progress made in increasing the numbers of senior women decision-makers in conflict resolution and peace processes, the Secretary-General is urged to make recommendations on ways to improve the follow-up to his strategic plan of action.[86]

Over the past five years, grass-roots women's struggles in Sierra Leone, in Burundi and in El Salvador, and the Beijing process itself, have helped to focus international attention on women and the peace and security agenda. For the first time, the Security Council recognised that peace is inextricably linked with equality between women and men and emphasised the importance of promoting an active and visible policy of mainstreaming a gender perspective into all polices and programmes while addressing armed or other conflict.

Recommendations:

1. Two experts should be appointed to carry out parallel assessments of :
   a) The impact of armed conflict on women with a focus on institutional arrangements for women's protection and the delivery of humanitarian support. This should take into account recent developments, including the Beijing Platform for Action, and progress made in the investigation and prosecution of war crimes against women; and,
   b) The second study should focus on women's role in peace-building and the gender dimensions of peace processes and conflict resolution. The United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) should be called on to provide institutional support for this work, with financial support from the international community and, in particular, from the Development Assistance Committee (OECD) Working Party on Gender Equality.

2. Governments, the international community, and civil society should provide financial, political and technical support for women's peace-building initiatives and networks.

3. Gender and age desegregated data should be collected in all assessments, monitoring, reporting, evaluation and research. Mechanisms should be established to ensure appropriate information flow on gender issues to inform the policy and planning process with respect to peace support operations.

CHAPTER 16:

Photo: Andrew Sikorsky

Media and Communications

"I want to go to school and become a journalist so I can speak about my country and how useless this war is." [87]

—TC, 16, former child soldier

Media and other forms of communication can be used to fuel conflict but also have great potential to increase children's protection and contribute to peace-building and reconciliation. The rapid development of communications technologies has enhanced the potential of mass communication to reach millions of people in far-reaching ways, through print media, radio, television, video, theatre, the Internet or a combination of these communications tools.

In conflict situations, modern communications technology has been used successfully as a programming tool. In Mozambique, Save the Children Fund used photographs to enhance family reunification activities. In the Great Lakes Region, ICRC, IFRC and IRC used pen and paper, photography and computer technology to reunite thousands of families. In Colombia, schools and youth clubs are using a 'peace-building kit', that makes innovative use of video to train children in conflict resolution.

In Tanzania, Radio Kwizera offers refugees and host communities a mix of educational, development and entertainment programming. Developed with the participation of refugees, the station broadcasts 40 hours a week in Kirundi, Kiswahili, English and French on topics such as health and nutrition, children's issues, education and culture. In Kosovo, UNICEF used communication and cultural activities to facilitate dialogue and foster youth participation in community governance. In Burundi, Studio Ijambo, a Search for Common Ground project, produces news items and a popular radio soap opera to stimulate community discussion about sensitive issues like ethnic exclusion, conflict and gender roles.

Although telecommunications are becoming cheaper and more accessible, countries in conflict do not have ready access to modern technology. In 1998, the International Telecommunication Union estimated that 25 per cent of countries in the world had fewer than one telephone per 100 people. During conflict, the situation is far worse, as communications infrastructures are targeted or collapse. Even with these constraints, mass communications technologies offer great opportunities. Despite the global excitement about the Internet and computer technology, in many parts of the developing world, radio is the most far-reaching medium. Combined with interpersonal communication, the benefits of mass communication in the form of print, audio and visual technology can be multiplied.

And yet these new technologies, with their quick access to huge numbers of people, can also be vectors of destruction. A vivid example is Radio Télévision Libre des Milles Collines (RTLM) during the Rwanda genocide. This radio station used vicious propaganda to fuel ethnic hatred and to incite people to participate in the genocide. In response, media organisations have encouraged a discussion on the role of communications in conflict situations and promoted training on responsible journalism. Organisations such as the International Federation of Journalists have devised guidelines on children's rights and the media, to assist their members to carry out their reporting role without exploiting children caught in difficult circumstances.

But humanitarian and advocacy groups working with children in situations of conflict must also consider their roles. There are far too many examples of humanitarian workers being complicit - knowingly or unknowingly - while children are exploited for media, publicity and photo-opportunities: demobilised children asked to pose with guns; survivors of sexual violence identified and photographed, among others. Humanitarian organisations have been known to readily comply with requests from film-makers and journalists to talk to '*younger* girls who have been raped' or to children with 'more traumatic stories'. It is vital that humanitarian organisations and advocacy groups ensure that children's rights are not further violated through exploitative fund-raising publicity or unscrupulous journalism.

Media can be used effectively in a peacekeeping environment to help build trust between the operation and local communities. The media can provide credible information about a mission's mandate and activities and facilitate better interaction with local populations and other humanitarian organisations working in the country. Communications technology such as radio provides substantial security back-up—inadequate communications technology was a key reason given for the recent hostage taking of UN peacekeepers in Sierra Leone. In Resolution 1296, the UN Security Council condemned the use of media to incite hatred and provoke war crimes in situations of conflict. It proposed countermeasures, including the promotion of mass media components in peacekeeping missions to disseminate information on the protection of children and their rights, peace education and other peace-building initiatives.

Peacekeeping, peace-building and reconstruction activities can be enhanced through the active presence of strong, independent media. An independent media can provide reliable information about the conflict and be used to hold politicians, governments, UN agencies and others accountable for their actions. During the first democratic elections in South Africa, in 1994, the media played a crucial role in voter education and electoral registration and provided information that was helpful in making decisions about how to vote.

New technology can assist communities to monitor, document and report human rights and other violations, providing a tool for early warning. They also enable individuals and civil society groups to produce independent information and advocacy materials in support of the protection of children. Organisations such as WITNESS train human rights advocates throughout the world to use modern communications technology, such as satellite telephones, videos, cameras, computers and radio, to document human rights violations

Media and communications hold a fascination for many young people and can be used to engage adolescents in their own survival and development. The Convention on the Rights of the Child guarantees a child's right to freedom of expression, participation, access to information and leisure. Communications can promote all of these. Once motivated and empowered by information that is relevant to their lives, young people can be more easily engaged and involved in decision-making and programme planning. In South Africa the community radio sector has involved large numbers of young people in social and political debate, while offering training and using adolescents as resources in community empowerment.

Recommendations:

1. UN agencies and civil society groups should explore ways in which modern communications technology can assist monitoring and verification of child rights violations in conflict situations.

2. Agencies and civil society groups should develop guidelines for their staff to assist interactions with the media that will not harm children in their charge.

3. Humanitarian agencies should develop programmes for adolescents to use new communications technology to promote community awareness in health, education and other vital areas for survival in conflict situations.

CHAPTER 17:

CIDA Photo: Cindy Andrew

Preventing War

"We are the seeds that will stop the war."[88]

—Mayerly Sanchez, age 14, Colombia Children's Peace Movement

The best way to protect children from wars is to stop them happening—by encouraging equitable development and finding peaceful ways to resolve conflict. While it is vital to protect children during today's armed conflicts, it is just as important to prevent the outbreak of future wars. The only way of truly protecting children from the impact of armed conflict is to stop the conflicts themselves: once a war is under way, children's suffering can only be mitigated.

At an international level, equitable and sustainable development is a precondition for reducing global conflict. Unfortunately, the international community has not been prepared to make the necessary investments. Today, 1.2 billion people live in absolute poverty and at least half of them are children.[89] The misery represents a massive denial of human rights that can only generate more violence and conflict.

Governments must lower the risk of armed conflict by demilitarising their societies—if for no other reason than to reduce the percentage of their gross domestic product spent on military expenditures and to free those resources for human development. Tighter controls need to be placed on the international flow of weapons and to stop the illicit trafficking in diamonds, narcotics and other products that fuel so many conflicts.

A financial blueprint for supporting the basic rights of children and achieving social goals, the 20/20 Initiative, was endorsed by the World Summit for Social Development. The Initiative calls for 20 per cent of national budgets in developing countries and 20 per cent of donor aid to be allocated to basic social services. Studies show that developing countries and donors fall well short of these benchmarks even though this kind of commitment would help fulfil children's rights, overcome poverty and lay a foundation for preventing conflicts. Debt has a crippling impact on children and development in many poor countries that spend more on debt servicing than on basic social services such as health care and education. Cancelling debts or rapid and deep debt relief for heavily indebted poor countries is essential for building a brighter future for children.

There are always early indicators that signal the potential advent of armed conflicts. Effective warning systems can gather data from a variety of sources and can, with the help of modern communications technology, easily disseminate the information. But to be of any use, early warning must be linked to early action—and early action is inextricably linked to political will. The Rwandan genocide is a clear example of failure in both respects. Despite the warning signs, the lack of political will handcuffed the ability of the United Nations and the international community to prevent the conflict and the eventual genocide. The Commander of the small UN force in Rwanda at the time insisted that a well-equipped, modern force of 5,000 troops could have stopped most of the killings, a contention since confirmed in a study carried out by an Organisation of African Unity (OAU) Panel of Eminent Personalities.[90] The Carnegie Commission on Preventing Deadly Conflicts concluded: "The problem is not that we do not know about incipient and large-scale violence; it is that we often do not act. Examples from 'hot spots' around the world illustrate that the potential for violence can be defused through early, skilful and integrated application of political, diplomatic, economic and military measures."[91]

Preventing armed conflict and stabilising countries emerging from conflict lies at the heart of the mission of the United Nations and has, in recent years, been on the agenda of the Security Council and the General Assembly. Specialised political guidance, peacekeeping missions and technical assistance form a part of the United Nation's preventive action. Peace-building offices in the Central African Republic, Guinea-Bissau and Liberia help strengthen national democratic institutions and promote reconciliation, regional peace initiatives and human rights. None of these, however, give sufficient focus to child rights or gender.

In the past decade, UN peacekeeping operations have supported peace-building in the form of disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration programs, election monitoring, and mine action. But throughout all of these actions, it has become clear that the international community is unwilling to invest adequate resources for prevention. Although many countries pay lip service to the potential of the United Nations, they are not prepared to give it the political or financial backing it needs to take decisive action. For every dollar all the world's nations spend on military activities, less than half a cent goes towards United Nations peacekeeping.[92]

There has been some limited success at the regional level where organisations such as the Organisation of American States (OAS), the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the OAU and the European Union (EU) have used their collective power to deal with threats to democratically elected governments and regional instability, sometimes forestalling or preventing altogether the commencement of armed conflict.

Recommendations:

1. The UN Security Council, in cooperation with the rest of the UN system, must use all the tools at its disposal to prevent conflicts, including early warning, preventive diplomacy, preventive deployment of peacekeepers, preventive disarmament, and post-conflict peace-building.

2. Regional approaches to preventing conflicts and promoting peace must be encouraged and strengthened, including through continued and improved collaboration with the United Nations, humanitarian organisations and NGOs, and increased attention to child rights, protection and gender.

3. While broad strategies to overcome poverty are needed, specific steps to fulfil children's right to primary health care, adequate nutrition, clean water and sanitation, and quality basic education must be taken while ensuring rapid and deep debt relief for heavily indebted poor countries.

Conclusion

"How long will it take before things get better? A month, a year?"[93]

—Question posed to Graça Machel by a Palestinian child in 1995

Significant progress has been made since the 1996 Report on the Impact of Armed Conflict on Children was introduced.

The collective energy and commitment of non-governmental organisations and other civil society groups, regional organizations, the United Nations and governments, has resulted in an impressive glossary of achievements, nationally and internationally. Children are now more central to the peace and security agenda. War crimes against children and women in conflict have been prosecuted and violations are now being documented and reported more systematically. International standards protecting children in conflict have been strengthened. Children are actively working to build peace in their communities. Efforts have been made to better target sanctions. And much more is known about the ways in which small arms and light weapons destroy children's lives. The focus of humanitarian assistance — whether it's access to food, education, water, or land and housing — is shifting inexorably towards meeting the rights and needs of children affected by armed conflict.

In spite of this progress, the assaults against children continue. An estimated 300,000 children are still participating in armed combat. Children in 87 countries live amid the contamination of more than 60 million landmines. At least 20 million children have been uprooted from their homes. Girls and women continue to be marginalised from mainstream humanitarian assistance and protection. Humanitarian personnel continue to be targeted and killed. Millions of children are abandoned to cope with the multiple and compounded effects of armed conflict and HIV/AIDS. Hundreds of thousands of children continue to die from disease and malnutrition in flight from conflict or in camps for displaced persons. Small arms and light weapons continue to proliferate excessively. Millions of children are scarred, physically and psychologically.

In tolerating this scourge of war against children we ourselves become complicit. Power and greed can never be an excuse for sacrificing children. No one — not the United Nations, not regional organisations, not governments, nor civil society groups — has moved quickly enough or done enough. The international community, in all of its manifestations, must adopt a new sense of urgency. The Security Council must lead the international community with speed to embrace the recommendations in this review and to prevail against impunity for crimes committed against children. Children's protection should not have to be negotiated. Those who wage, legitimise and support wars must be condemned and held to account. Children must be cherished, nurtured and spared the pernicious effects of war. Children can't afford to wait.

Protecting children's rights in armed conflict: Glossary of Progress

August 1996	The Graça Machel Report on the Impact of Armed Conflict on Children is introduced
August 1996	First Security Council briefing (under the Arria Formula) on children in armed conflict
October 1996	Launch of Colombian Children's Movement for Peace, two-time Nobel prize nominee
September 1997	Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict appointed
October 1997	UNHCR and Save the Children Alliance launch Action for the Rights of Children (ARC) training programme
October 1997	Nobel Peace Prize awarded to International Campaign to Ban Landmines
March 1998	Rädda Barnen launches database on child soldiers
April 1998	Representative of the Secretary-General on Internally Displaced Persons introduces *Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement*
May 1998	Leading NGOs form the Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers
May 1998	Canada and Norway sign the Lysøen Declaration for human security making a commitment to children's protection in armed conflict
July 1998	Adoption of the Rome Statute for an International Criminal Court which includes crimes against humanity and war crimes against children and women
September 1998	The International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda sets a precedent in prosecuting rape and sexual violence in civil war
October 1998	UN Secretary-General sets a minimum age requirement for UN peacekeepers, preferably at 21 years of age but no less than 18
February 1999	UNICEF launches a Children's Peace and Security Agenda

March 1999	Entry into force of the Ottawa Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on their Destruction
May 1999	The International Action Network on Small Arms (IANSA) launches an international campaign against the accumulation, proliferation and misuse of small arms
June 1999	The International Labor Organisation Convention 182 defines child soldiering as one of the worst forms of child labour and sets 18 as the minimum age for forced or compulsory recruitment
July 1999	Special provisions for children included in the Lomé Peace Agreement for Sierra Leone
August 1999	Child protection officers included in the mandate of the UN Observer Mission for Sierra Leone (UNOMSIL)
August 1999	The Security Council adopts Resolution 1261 on Children and Armed Conflict
September 1999	The Security Council adopts Resolution 1265 on the Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict
October 1999	Nobel Peace Prize awarded to Médicins sans Frontières
November 1999	Child protection included in the mandate of the UN Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC)
November 1999	Entry into force of the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child — the first regional treaty establishing 18 as a minimum age for all recruitment and participation in hostilities
November 1999	The OSCE Review Conference Declaration makes commitments to war-affected children
November 1999	International Alert and the United Nations Development Fund for Women launch an International Women Building Peace Campaign
December 1999	The International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia recognises rape as a violation of the laws or customs of war
December 1999	Rwanda adopts new law to support reconstruction, allowing girls and women to inherit land and other property
February 2000	The Secretary-General releases child-focused guidelines on the *Role of United Nations Peacekeeping in Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration*

March 2000	The Security Council issues its first statement SC/6816 on women, peace and security, recognising women's role in conflict resolution, peacekeeping and peace-building
March 2000	The African, Caribbean and Pacific States and the European Community Joint Assembly adopt resolutions against the use of child soldiers
April 2000	ECOWAS adopts the Accra Declaration and Plan of Action for war-affected children.
May 2000	Adoption of an Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child establishing 18 as the minimum age for children's participation in hostilities
July 2000	The Security Council adopts Resolution 1308 on the HIV/AIDS pandemic worldwide and the severity of the crisis in Africa
August 2000	The Security Council adopts Resolution 1314 on Children and Armed Conflict
August 2000	Special provisions for children and women are included in the Burundi peace agreement
September 2000	International Conference on War-Affected Children, Winnipeg, Canada

Endnotes

1 www.oneworld.org

2 Reviewers include: Hodan Addou, Noeman Al Sayyad, David Angell, Anatole Ayissi, Yumi Bae, Sam Barnes, Jo Becker, Elizabeth Bernstein, David Biggs, Sherazade Boualia, Rachel Brett, Peter Buckland, Francesc Claret, Roberta Cohen, Christopher Coleman, Mark Connolly, Patrick Couteau and UNHCR colleagues, Joanne Csete, Catarina de Alberqueque, Marie de la Soudiere, Enrique Delamonica, Carol Djeddah and WHO colleagues, Paula Donovan, Rana Flowers, Virginia Gamba, Richard Garfield, Gulbadan Habibi, Eva Jespersen, Gareth Jones, Kate Joseph, Eylah Kadjar-Hamouda, Randolph Kent, James Kunder, Robert Lawson, Jean-Claude Legrand, Iain Levine, Ludmila Lhotska, Ernest Ligteringen, Ludmila Lhotska, Jane Lowicki, Una McCauley, Joao Madureira, Mark Malan, Roeland Monasch, Erin Mooney, Rory Mungoven, Viktor Bo Nylund, Valerie Oosterveld, Agostino Paganini, Allison Pillsbury, Francisco Quesney, Robert Scharf, Jens Schlyter, Wendy Smith, Crispin Stephen, Patrick Tigere and UNHCR colleagues, Marjatta Tolvanen, Jan Vandemoortele, Beth Verhey, Margaret Vogt, Mary Wareham, Marc Weil, Markus Werne, and Jane Zucker. Additional thanks to the numerous other experts who gave advice on specific points in the Review Document.

3 Dedicated research and assistance was provided by Saudamini Siegrist, Richard Leonard, Ivy Lam, Lieke van de Wiel and Rijuta Tooker. Writing and editorial assistance was provided by Janet Solberg and Peter Stalker.

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